

THE MOORINGS TONGA VAVA'U ISLANDS CRUISING GUIDE

THE MOORINGS BASE

The Moorings' base in Vava'u is designed and operated as a bareboat base. Tonga's laws do not permit work on Sundays so an emergency stand-by service is maintained on the day only. Normal services are maintained during the rest of the week. There are swing moorings located off the Moorings base at Neiafu but all other moorings in the group is by anchor. Embarkation and disembarkation is normally scheduled with the arrival and departure of international or inter island commuter flights or as arranged by booking.

WEATHER

The weather in Vava'u is controlled by trade winds blowing from the south east at an average of 12 knots. Temperatures range from 21°C in July to 30°C in February. From January to March the wind becomes more variable, humidity and rainfall increases, however the sailing conditions remain favourable. There is occasional strong Northwest winds with rain, normally clearing within 12 hours, with wind shifting to the south. Hurricanes are not a worry since Vava'u offers adequate forecasting and excellent protection. It is over 14 years since the last hurricane.

TIDES

The main tide rise and fall is 1 metre. Tide tables are standard on all Moorings yachts and should be consulted when planning the daily cruise. Tides can cause strong currents in narrow passages. During the periods of strong winds from a constant direction surface currents will build up. When steering a compass course, be aware that these currents may set you off your intended course.

When going ashore make sure the dinghy is well above high water mark and use the dinghy anchor on the beach to prevent a rising tide from floating the dinghy off the beach.

WEATHER FORECASTS

Radio Nuku'alofa: Dial 1017 kHz on the AM band.

Weather forecasts follow the BBC news at 0700 and the Australia news at 0800.

VHF Channel 10: Vava'u Marine Radio transmit the weather forecast at 1030 and 1530 daily apart from Sunday.

VHF Channel 6: This is the cruisers net which operates a general information service at 0830 each morning apart from Sundays. The weather is often discussed at great length on this channel in the mornings.

RADIO PROCEDURES

Moorings monitors VHF channel 68 during office hours from 0800 to 1700 hours daily. Call Moorings at any time during these hours and usually someone will be close at hand to reply. If you don't reach us on the first try, wait a short while and try calling again. If you wish to call another Moorings yacht call on 68 then change to 6, 14, 73 or 77 so that 68 is kept clear for other communications. Channel 16 is monitored onshore by the Vava'u Port Service and many of the cruising yachts may also monitor this channel.

Moorings request that their clients call each day between 1600 and 1630 hours to advise that they are anchored and their location. At that time we will be able to inform you of any salient weather information or notices to mariners that we might have to hand. In the event of an emergency and you are unable to contact us on the VHF continue to broadcast your location and problem. At times we are able to hear you when you may be unable to receive us. Our VHF radio range is approximately 25 miles covering all the anchorages in the Vava'u group. Occasionally we get radio shadows at anchorages #7 and #13. Communications are possible even though there may be some breaking up of the signals.

SERVICE CALLS

Should your yacht need service due to mechanical or rig problems, call us on channel 68 on the VHF to give us details. We can attend to such problems quickly if you can get to the nearest of the following anchorages: 5, 10, 11 or 25. We have road access to these points and can be with you in a matter of minutes if you have informed us of the nature of your problem and your intended anchorage.

ANCHORING

Most anchoring will be done at depths of 5m to 15m. Depths over 20m are not recommended. Virtually all the anchorages have visibility beyond such depths and it is easy to check for coral heads. Snorkel over your anchor to check for a proper set.

Use normal anchoring techniques with scope of 3 times the depth for all chain rodes and 5 to 7 times the depth for chain and rope ropes.

When using a plough anchor wait until the yacht is head to wind then check the anchor set by backing with a *slow* reverse pull back from your engine.

Should your anchor get stuck shorten the rode to neat vertical position and fasten it off the one of the cleats. Try to break the anchor out with the yacht in forward gear at slow engine speed. Do not make the rode fast to the windlass. If you are unable to break out the anchor make careful note of its position, tie a fender and a mooring line to the end of the entire anchor, chain and rode and advise us by VHF. We will send a diver to retrieve it. In unsettled waters with strong wind conditions use more than the usual scope. It may be prudent in some circumstances to use a second bow anchor, having the two anchors off the bow at 45° angle to each other. The second anchor is a Danforth which has very good holding characteristics particularly in coral.

When the weather improves shorten the rode to prevent excess line fouling the coral heads. You will find that anchorages numbers 10, 16 and 25 make good all weather anchorages.

FISH AND POSSIBLE HAZARDS

Many fish can be caught and most make excellent eating. Tonga is fortunate not to have any fish-poisoning problems. However, when fishing in any unfamiliar area it is best to check with the local inhabitants before consuming your catch. Due to Tongan beliefs there is to be no fishing on Sundays anywhere in Tonga.

There are few hazards in the sea, as indicated by the many Tongans that you see swimming, however normal caution justifies

1. Do not swim where fish have been cleaned or near garbage.

Do watch out for sea urchins as their sharp spines can inflict a painful wound. Stonefish are very poisonous but fortunately are not very common. The stone fish is normally about 10 inches long, rests on the bottom, resembles a rock and has 13 venomous spines on its back. Similarly, Sea Snakes are a rare problem. They are about 12 inches long, have black and white stripes and bask on the surface in shallow, warm water. With a very small mouth and fangs set well back in their mouth it is virtually impossible for them to bite a person. They are not normally aggressive but we do advise that they be treated with respect.

We have not heard of any cases of Sea Snake or Stone Fish poisoning in Vava'u, however, should you be unfortunate enough to experience this contact us on the VHF and head directly to Neiafu where we will arrange to get you to the hospital. These types of poisoning can be serious.

Fire Coral is a nuisance in all tropical waters therefore, to avoid the associated uncomfortable rashes do not touch any coral and we suggest you wear a pair of gloves while diving.

EMERGENCIES

In the event of an emergency we suggest one or all of the following.

1. *Contact us on VHF channel 71.*
2. *Call for assistance on VHF channel 16.*
3. *Ask any local boats or yachts for help.*
4. *Seek help in the villages*
5. *Go to the Neiafu Wharf - the Police station is near the market.*

TONGAN CUSTOMS

There are several Tongan customs to be noted and respected in order that we may fit into this society with minimal strain.

1. Tipping is heartily discouraged by all. Please, no tipping or handouts. The Tongans are proud people and do not want to create a situation where tips or handouts result in hordes of people harassing the yachtsmen. A better reward for kindness or good service is a letter, gift or photograph from you at home.
2. Sunday is a religious holiday and is strictly observed. Business stops and Tongans may not swim or fish by law. Please be quiet, tolerant and pay deference to the Tongan Sunday. However, if you are in the islands away from any villages carry on with your usual charter activities.
3. Tongans are conservative in dress. Men always wear shirts in public places. Charterers should too. Tongan ladies obviously do not wear scanty attire anywhere and even swim fully clothed. We suggest when entering a village charterers should wear shorts and a blouse. Away from the villages a bikini, if you wear one, is fine for swimming. On Sundays, if entering a village and particularly when attending church, please wear long slacks and a shirt for the men and at least a knee length shirt and blouse for the ladies.
4. Tongan handicrafts are acknowledged to be among the best available in Polynesia. Their large Tapa cloths are unique and a worthwhile buy. The basketwork is particularly distinctive and a worthwhile investment. Arrangements may be made for surface mail shipments at a very reasonable price if you wish. Handicrafts are available from variety of handicraft shops and at the various feasts you may attend during your cruise.
5. Coconuts and fruits growing ashore are private property. Do not take any without

permission from the landowner. If you wish to buy supplies of local fruits, vegetables you will usually find someone in the island villages who will sell such items at very reasonable prices. Following is a list of villages on the off lying islands with their numbered locations:

- 13 Hunga
- 15 Matamaka
- 8 Kapa
- 38 Ovaka
- 21 Taunga
- 28 Ofu
- 26 Olo'ua

VAVA'U HISTORY

Vava'u with its encircling waterway, has one of the most beautiful harbours in the Pacific, or for that matter in the world, as you will soon discover for yourself. Vava'u has gem-like islands that make a perfect setting for all your dreams of a Pacific Paradise. The islands, like women, must have something more than beauty if they are to continue to attract.

Happily Vava'u has that something that is as interesting as it is beautiful. You only have to talk to the people to discover a history so cosmopolitan that it virtually connects these islands to every continent in the world. Or, listen to some of the old men and women and you'll be carried back in history to the ancient times of myth. Fishing has always been part of the Tongan way of life. The fish story to end all fish stories became a part of Tonga story telling when Maui, the great Polynesian God threw his line into the sparkling ocean and soon felt that tug which spells excitement. He gave a mighty pull, then another and there were all the islands Vava'u! No wonder the local people felt so much at home on the sea! The islands themselves curve lovingly around the water making endless bays, tiny beaches and secret inlets.

The first inhabitants of "Maui's Fish" settled in a yet undetermined date of the history of mankind. They settled on the island and learned to make use of everything they found on the islands and in the surrounding sea. In doing so they grew to love their home and even today the most adventurous and the most

sophisticated of Vava'u's people, either overseas for business, study or pleasure always have a nagging nostalgia for their own islands. It was perhaps such a love that kept Captain Cook, the greatest of all Pacific explorers, from ever seeing Vava'u. In 1777 he was in the Ha'apai group where he discovered and charted many islands. One of Cook's greatest friends was Finau, the Chief of Vava'u. When Chief Finau told Cook that he was going home to collect some highly prized red feathers from the tail of the frigate bird Captain Cook said at once that he would take one of his ships and accompany him. Chief Finau discouraged him. Was Finau seized by the fear at that moment that some white men might take over his precious Vava'u? Did he have some other reason for not wanting to take his English friend home? No one will ever know. We know only that Captain Cook stayed in Ha'apai recording sadly in his journal that Finau told him that in Vava'u "there was neither Harbour nor anchorage". This needless to say, must have stand as one of the greatest lies in history. Finau Kept Cook from coming to Vava'u but he could not stem the tide of history, which was filling the Pacific with explorers of many nations. Only four years after Captain Cook's disappointment the honour of discovering Vava'u fell to Spain. Francisco Maurelle, after a brief stop at the island of Late, reached the main island of Vava'u on 5th of May 1781 and anchored near the present village of Longamapu in the bay he to which gave the name "Port of Refuge". This name now applies to the whole of Vava'u's harbour. Maurelle was not looking for new worlds to conquer. He was merely trying to deliver despatches from Manila to the Spanish authorities in San Blas, Mexico. The commission had come to him so late in the season that he had not been able to follow the usual route of the galleons, but had come south hoping to be, as he eventually was, swept up the coast of South America by favourable currents and winds. When Francisco Maurelle arrived in Vava'u, his ship was leaking, his men were sick with scurvy, cockroaches had eaten all the ships biscuits and what little water he had left was stinking. To Maurelle, Vava'u was indeed a port of refuge as he found friendly people whose chiefs supplied him with fresh food. His commission was uppermost in his mind

therefore he made no extended exploration of the islands and contented himself with sailing short a distance south to the bay that now bears his name, Port Maurelle. There, close to the present village of Falevai, he found an abundance of fresh water, thus, with his ship prepared and his men refreshed he was on his way.

In spite of his haste to leave Maurelle was not unaware of the potential value of Vava'u and upon his return to Spain he reported it and its people in such glowing terms that the King ordered Don Alejandro Malaspina to include Vava'u on the great voyage of discovery which was then being prepared in the hopes that the new islands would be added to the Spanish Empire.

Malaspina, like Columbus before him, was an Italian in the employ of the Spaniards and like Columbus; he too fell into disgraces on his return to Spain. In fact, Malaspina's disgrace was so profound that his journals were not published for many years and have not been translated into English in their entirety. It has been said that his troubles began when he cast his eyes too amorous on the wife of an important Madrid official. It seems more likely that his difficulties arose because he was a man humane beyond his time who, although he dutifully carried out his obligations to annex land for Spain, questioned the morality of taking over places that already had perfectly good governments of their own. As far as the Pacific goes, Malaspina was rescued from obscurity largely through the efforts of the late Queen Salote who discovered references to him while doing research in the Mitchell Library in Sydney.

In those days the world moved so slowly that it was twelve years from the time of Maurelle's visit to the day when Malaspina in command of the "Descubierta" and the "Atriveda" sailed into Port of Refuge. In December 1887 an unfortunate Frenchman, La Perouse, stopped briefly at Port Maurelle but finding no people there at the time and being uncertain about anchoring had sailed away again leaving only a few paragraphs in his journal to mark the first French visit to Vava'u. There is not any record of other ships visiting between the time of Maurelle and Malaspina.

To Malaspina and the men of his expedition must go the honours for a detailed and accurate observation of Tongan society at the time of their visit. The men with Malaspina included naturalists, artists, linguists and astronomers in addition to the ship's officers, all of whom seemed to have been exceptionally intelligent and sensitive observers. Unlike the anxious Maurelle, Malaspina accompanied the chief of the day up the harbour to Neiafu, which was then a well-established religious centre. The day that Malaspina left Vava'u, against the dictates of his conscience, he took possession of the islands in the name of the King of Spain and on the sight of the observatory that his men had set up near today's Longamapu he buried a bottle containing a proclamation to that effect. In recent years the present King of Tonga, Taufa Ahau Tupou IV, acting on advice of historians who thought they had identified the sight, attempted to find the bottle but his efforts apparently were in vain and the bottle has not yet been found. The Spaniards never came back. Troubles in Europe made them forget Vava'u but within the next century the pace of history accelerated, the Pacific was explored, charted, written about, annexed, converted and lived in by a vast assortment of peoples. Religion brought some of them. The London Missionary Society was the first religious institution to bring Englishmen to Tonga. For the most part they had a rough time here and in the end the most unfortunate ones were killed, the others fled. Only one, George Vason, a former Bricklayer, found joy in the islands. It was short lived. He foresaked his religion and his countrymen for the charms of the Chief's daughter and the Tongan way of life. His protector was killed in a civil war therefore he took refuge on an English ship, returned to his country and then re wrote an engaging account of his Tongan years. Although he said he regretted his lapse into heathenism his book includes more nostalgia for his Tongan days than regret for his religious strayings. His book remains one of the best accounts of early Tongan society. Before many years had elapsed the Wesleyan Church brought fresh supplies of Englishmen. The religion has endured and until this day is the state religion of Tonga. Until recently, England has been the dominant

foreign influence in Tongan life and politics. In the 19th century the Catholic religion brought French priests, nuns and traders to the islands. German businessmen drifted down from Samoa and settled mainly in Vava'u where there are still the descendants of many old German families.

The Whaling ships, which filled the Western Pacific with adventure, were largely American but their officers and crews were men of every nation and every continent. Less exciting but more enduring were the traders and government people who followed in the wake of the missionaries and whalers. Today men and women from everywhere in the world find their way to the islands. Some linger for the rest of their lives; some stay only a day or two. Each has his own story which becomes part of the ever growing tale of the islands and each adds something to the interest which, like Vava'u, is ever new, ever changing.

CRUISING AND NAVIGATIONAL NOTES

Neiafu in the main town of the Vava'u Group and as such is the only reliable place to buy fuel, LPG, provisions, produce and general shopping. Fresh water is also available for the filling of tanks however this is often brackish and has a very high lime content. There are three banks represented in the town where Visa and MasterCard transactions can be carried out. There are a number of small to medium general stores, which can supply the majority of provisions required by cruising sailors, and charter clients but be aware that some foods are often unavailable.

The produce market opposite the Police Station supplies fresh fruit and vegetables. The selection varies considerably according to the season. Saturday morning is the best time to do any market shopping.

There are two or three bakeries in Neiafu and bread is baked daily apart from Saturday. This bread does not appear to contain any preservatives and is delicious fresh, toast quality after one day and normally history on day four.

LPG bottles can be filled by Homegas who are situated at the southern end of the harbour at the village of Toulā. It is recommended that a

taxi be hired in town to run the bottle(s) down to depot to be filled.

Diesel and petrol can be obtained from Coleman Marine Services next to The Moorings charter base or from Island Gas Limited below The Bounty Bar and the Royal Tongan Airlines office which can supply fuel from a tanker on the main wharf.

Fresh water (Town Supply) can be obtained from Coleman Marine Services or from The Paradise Hotel Wharf further down the harbour towards the gas depot. As already mentioned this water has a very high lime content and is not really suitable for drinking. Purified water available from the general stores such as the Fatafata Mafana Centre. Slipway service and casual mooring rental can be obtained from Coleman Marine Services.

ANCHORAGES

CHART # 1.

- (1) **NEIAFU** - The eastern (town side) shore from Coleman Marine Services to the Paradise Hotel. *Caution. Avoid the shallow are between Coleman Marine Services and the main wharf.*
- (2) **THE COURSEWAY** - Situated off the village of Toula at the south-eastern end of the harbour. *Caution. Keep well clear of the large mooring buoy near the bulk fuel and gas installation as this is used regularly by the island tanker when it arrives to off-load fuel.*
- (3) **PANGAIMOTU** - This anchorage is on the Eastern Shore of Pangaimotu Island opposite the Paradise Hotel. This anchorage is generally not quite as protected from the Southeast Tradewinds that predominate year round. Caution. There is a large shallow reef, which extends out from Pangaimotu just south of this anchorage.

At the southern end of the harbour between the between the Courseway and Pangaimotu's western shore in around 36 metres of water is the wreck of a 400' cargo ship which burned at the main wharf years ago and was

towed there to sink. This wreck is marked with mooring buoys, one at the bow and one at the stern. When the water clarity is very good this wreck can be seen from the surface.

The harbour entrance is below Mt Talau; the prominent bush clad flat topped 430' hill at the north-western end of the harbour. A small sand bar extends out from Utelei and is marked by a green buoy. The buoyage system in Tonga is based on the international system so this buoy must be kept to port on departure from the harbour. Once past the shallows turn to pass between the channel buoys.

- (4) **VAIPUUA** - If you continue around Mt Talau on the northern side you will see the Vaipuu courseway. Just to the left is a quiet bay bordered by two 300'' hills. Generally holding in this bay is good but there is the occasional coral head which must be avoided. This is a good anchorage in north to Northwest conditions.
- (5) **LOTUMA** - As you move down the fiord like entrance to Neiafu you will come to the island of Lotuma. This island is a Tonga Defence Force base and landing is prohibited. Do not pass through the passage between Pangaimotu and Lotuma as there is a reef that extends across and there is insufficient depth. As you pass Lotuma a large anchorage called Lotuma Bay appears on your port side. This comfortable anchorage provides shelter in most winds and is an excellent anchorage for charter clients on the first or last night of their cruise as it is only about three miles from the charter bases in Neiafu. There is a good snorkelling to be had on the reef between Lotuma Island and Pangaimotu. The variety of small reef fish found here is as good as anywhere in Vava'u, although the coral itself is not that exciting. On the headland of Hikutomoli at the south-western end of the bay you will find the Tonga Beach Resort. This resort has a fine

restaurant and bar. Dinner reservations must be made by VHF channel 71 beforehand. Most popular credit cards are accepted. The resort has one mooring. Anyone anchoring in front of the resort does so at his or her own risk. The holding is not good and the beach falls away very quickly. It is recommended that, for peace of mind, if the mooring is not available diners or other visitors to the resort, anchor in Lotuma Bay and dinghy the short distance to the resort. Dolphin Pacific Diving and The Friendly Island Kayak Co. are also based at the resort. Dolphin Diving offers a full range of Dive Courses, Dive tours, Hire equipment and bottle fills. They also offer a rendezvous dive service where they will pick up from vessels anchored at anchorages 1 through to 7 for diving trips. The Friendly Island Kayak Co. offer day or overnight sea kayak tours through the beautiful Vava'u Islands. Both Dolphin Pacific Diving and The Friendly Kayak Co can be contacted on VHF channel 71.

- (6) **MALA** - As you move south from the Tongan Beach Resort around Utungake you come to an exposed area where the S.E. tradewinds whistle through with considerable velocity. This wind was nicknamed the "Mala Blast" by a local charter operator's wife. In this passage between Utungake and Kapa is the pretty island of Mala. You may anchor to the N.W. of Mala in 6-7 metres of water on a sandy bottom. There is a good swimming beach on Mala and fabulous snorkelling off the smaller islands towards Kapa. Be aware of the current, which can be as strong as 2 knots at times. Those anchoring overnight are advised to move slightly to the north in the lee of the island where the wind and tide are not so strong. Caution: Do not try to pass over the shallows on either side of Mala as this area is a mine field of coral heads and the depth is only 1.2 metres at low tide.

KAPA is a large island with two good anchorages. Between Kapa and Nuapapa are the smaller islands of Luakapa, Oto and Ava. As you round the N.W. tip of Kapa you will come upon the entrance Swallow's Cave. There is a near vertical face to a depth of around 77 metres and anchoring is impossible. It is suggested that if you wish to visit the cave you either anchor in Port Maurelle, anchorage #7, 1.2 miles to the S.E. and dinghy back or lay just off the cave entrance leaving one competent person in charge of the vessel while rest of the crew dinghy in shifts in the cave. The best time to see Swallow's cave is in the mid to late afternoon as the sun lights up the stalactites and sends its rays into the clear deep blue water illuminating the coral formations and stalactites and sends its rays into the clear deep blue water illuminating the coral formations and stalagmites far below the surface. The beauty of this cave is said to rival that of the Blue Grotto in Capri. On the ceiling above the mud nests birds that inhabit the cave are visible. These nests are often mistaken for bats. The walls of the cave have unfortunately been covered in graffiti; however, much of it goes back many years and may be of some historical interest.

- (7) **PORT MAURELLE** - As you round the headland of Kapa from Swallow's Cave keeping clear of the coral, which extends well out from the shore you will enter a reasonably large bay with a beautiful long sandy beach. This is Port Maurelle, one of the most popular anchorages in the Vava'u group. This beautiful bay is named after Francisco Maurelle, the first European to visit Vava'u and is where he anchored while watering his ship. Where he obtained his water from is a complete mystery as there is no sign of a creek or a spring there now.

This bay has some shallow coral reefs, outcrops and coral heads that extend some distance from the shore with a dinghy channel running virtually in to the centre of the beach. It is advised that swinging room be allowed should the wind change to the N.W.

- (8) **NUKU** - Just south of Port Maurelle is the pretty anchorage of Nuku. Nuku is

an island just off the shore of Kapa near the village of Falavai and is commonly known as the "Picnic Island" as many beach functions for visiting dignitaries are held there. It is suggested that vessels anchor between Nuku and the shore of Kapa keeping well clear of the shallows which join Nuku to the shore. If the trade winds are very strong it is advised that you drop anchor in front of the village in the lee of Kapa. **Caution:** *There are extensive shallow reefs extending from Nuku down the southern coast of Kapa and projecting well of the S.E. tip. These are normally well visible but use caution and keep well offshore. There is a natural tendency to try and cut the corner on the S.E. tip, which could result at the best, embarrassment, at the worst, the loss of your vessel.*

CRUISING COMMENT: Of the islands between Kapa and Nuapapa, Ava is the most interesting. The northern face of this island has the most incredible coral reef extending out two or three feet below the water at low tide with the most amazing colourful drop-offs on the outer edges. This has to be some of the most amazing snorkelling in Vava'u. We suggest that you dinghy to the island from Port Maurelle or Nuku. **Please do not walk on the coral as it damages easily and takes many years to regenerate.** Leave one person in charge of the dinghy while others enjoy the reef.

Caution: *When navigating southward between Kapa and Nuapapa don't cut between the small rocky island of Luaofa and Nuapapa a reef extends between them.*

- (9) **Luamoko** - There is a shelf running along the eastern side of this island, which provides a daytime anchorage, and the snorkelling is interesting. Use this anchorage only if the incoming swells are not too high, as it is exposed in such conditions.

PANGAIMOTU is a large island connected to Vava'u by a coral causeway at Ahanga Passage and on the south end of this island are beautiful and well protected anchorages. These are as follows.

- (10) **AISEA'S OR LISA BEACH** - This is easy to enter with no hazards and very good holding with a sand bottom. Anchor off a bit as you may be back-winded and lay toward the beach in light air. Aisea hosts a Tongan feast on this beach for visiting yachts.
- (11) **TAPANA** - This bay formed by Pangai to the north and Tapana to the south offers several good anchorages in about 1 feet with good beaches and there is shelling on the windward side. The main beach on Pangaimotu is known as ANO BEACH and this is another popular Tongan feast location. When the wind is strong from the S.E. a sheltered anchorage may be found in the south of the bay in the lee of Tapana, just off the small beach.
- (12) **TAPANA SOUTH** - This is a quiet little anchorage tucked close under the southern shore of Tapana, in about 10 feet at low tide, on a gravel shelf. Tapana will be to the north and the tip of a small island to the east. Lautala and a small islet will be on the south and this may be used as a night time anchorage in settled wind conditions.

CHART # 2 & 3.

- (13) **HUNGA** - This is the most westward island and it is a beautiful island with abandoned citrus orchards on the S.E. end of Fofoa Island and a fine village in the lagoon. The one navigable entrance

to the lagoon is on the west side of the island between high cliffs and is similar in appearance to a false entrance about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile further north. The correct entrance is about 150 feet across and is boarded by cliffs with a very high cliff on the south side. In the entrance is a rock about 6 feet in diameter and 10 feet high and it is about 50 feet from the north side and 150 feet from the south side. Leave this rock to the port on entering. Once between the rock and the south shore the channel becomes narrow and shallow, bear 115 magnetic, which will lead to the beach on the far shore. Two buoys have been placed inside the entrance by the management of Club Hunga. Pass between these Buoys before turning towards the resort and village. Even though dynamite has been used to improve this entrance to Hunga, it remains tricky and hazardous. It should be made at high tide without current and good sunlight. Never try it with a large running sea, at low tide, with a strong current or without adequate sunlight. You may enter only between one hour before and up to one hour after the actual high tide. Once inside the lagoon there is a magnificent lake like anchorage. In fact, there are several good beaches and anchorages in generally deep water. The area around the two small islands midway up the east shore is too shallow for anchoring. The village is in the N.E. corner and at the southern end you may dinghy through a shallow pass to Foata with good snorkelling off that island, however, check the tidal times and height to make sure you will be able to return. Club Hunga on the N.W. side of the lagoon near the false entrance is a welcome watering hole and restaurant where a fun night is guaranteed.

- (14) **FOEATA ISLAND** - is a beautiful, clear weather, daytime anchorage surrounded by magnificent white sand beaches with plenty of snorkelling. Drop anchor in the protected S.E. corner in about 15 feet of water. Entrance

should be made through the northern pass sailing from east to west. Pass over the three-fathom mark shown on the chart lying between the southern fringe reef of Hunga and the coral patch to the south with two coral heads shown. When taking this route in it is a clear pass into the area, but proceed slowly with a lookout on the bow. Remember this is a daytime anchorage only; do not overnight here. This anchorage can be very uncomfortable at high tide as the surf can pass over the reef.

NUAPAPU - This is east of Hunga and south of Mo'ungalafa and it has several anchorages in its bight. On the west shore is the famed Mariner's cave. The western shore is generally steep therefore be careful on the southern end and do not go between Nuapapa and Vaka'eitu as difficult to see at high tide with the sun in east especially during early morning.

MARINER'S CAVE - An underwater cave requiring good snorkelling skills, however is not too difficult for the competent swimmer. The best way to test you ability to tackle the entrance into Mariner's Cave is to dive from a few yards to one side of your yacht, swim under the keel and come up a few yards on the other side. If you can do that with confidence then you can try the Mariner's Cave entrance. Mariner's Cave is situated on the chart in the position where the underlining of the name touches the cliff. This is approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile S.W. of the narrow gap at Kitu. Proceed S.W. from that position and be on the look out for a patch of white 'leaching' or stain on the rock cliff face. When you are approximately 100 feet from the cliff, you will observe one prominent coconut tree standing right above the white patch area. Mariner's Cave entrance is directly below this position.

Plan to visit the cave on a bright sunlight afternoon at about 3pm when you will have beat lighting for the cave. As with Swallow's Cave, you cannot anchor the yacht due to the depth at this point. It is advised you take turns exploring the cave, with someone responsible for the yacht. Do not even consider using the dinghy; just swim directly from your boarding

ladder. You cannot mistake the entrance to the cave. It is big, wide and goes down for over 50 feet. When entering the cave, dive down and while swimming through, keep looking up at the rock ceiling above you. On the inside, when you see where water meets the rock, you can come straight up to the surface with no problems. You are now on the inside.

Nearby on the north end of Nuapapu lies Kitu. The passage between is narrow, gusty and plagued by strong currents. If you use this pass, do so under motor only. On entering the bight of Nuapapu you have two options. You may either follow close around to the south of Matamaka or enter to the east of Lape.

(15) MATAMAKA ANCHORAGE - This is good in most weather except when a strong south or S.W. wind is blowing. In approaching from the east, stay about 100 yards offshore and watch for a very treacherous reef to port. Go in to the north end of the beach and round up north of the jetty to anchor. Just end of the beach is a conspicuous red roof and there is a fine beach and village here. Beware of the reef coming out from the south end of the beach.

VAVA'EITU is another good overnight anchorage. Keep close to Lape and well away from Kulo on entering and anchor by the mooring here in about 40 feet. Shallow water extends far out and there is a coral head about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile south of Kulo that is hard to see, therefore give it plenty of room.

The pass between Lape and Langitau has a point of reef stretching from Lape, however, if you stay close to Langitau and post a lookout on the bow, you may use this pass with caution. Enter the pass in good weather with bright light. If in doubt, take the northern route around to make your approach to the areas west of Lape.

(16) LANGITAU - is a very beautiful island and, as indicated on the charter, may be used as a day anchorage in sand in approximately 15 to 20 feet of water. You will find interesting snorkelling in this area. On Vaka'eitu, the Papao

Village Backpackers Resort has the Lighthouse Café. This ethnic style is well worth a visit.

(17) LAPE - is in the middle of Nuapapu's bight and shelters a fine anchorage on the N.W. side. There is also a small island just N.E. of Lape, therefore, anchor S.W. of this island just off the small beach on Lape.

(18)(19)(20) To the S.E. of Lape lies three similar islands: FONUA LAI, SISIA, KATAFANGA - these are all day anchorages since they are very exposed. Sisia, the largest, offers good diving off the beach and towards its southern end. At Katafanga you will find a small beach lined with coconut trees and grass. It is a beautiful picnic spot.

HAZARD - A most dangerous reef lies S.S.E. of Langitau and is not properly marked on the navigational charter of Vava'u. However, we have drawn it in on Chart#3. Covered by 4 feet of water, the reef lies to the S.E. of the charted reef. Keep close to Langitau or Ovaka to avoid this hazard.

SNORKELLING NOTE - When anchored at #16 take the dinghy over to the reef connecting Nuapapu and Vaka'eitu which appears on the chart as the two fathom area on the outside of the reef. Beach the dinghy, put out the dinghy anchor then cross the reef to the outside, either by walking or swimming over it, depending on the tide. Please take care as it can be dangerous if the incoming ocean swells are high. Most of the time it is safe to snorkel in the area. In bright sunlight one will find with to be one of the most colourful reefs ever see.

The **OVAKA** coral wharf marks this bay. Anchor off in about 30 feet of water. Use this as an overnight anchorage in only very fair weather.

On the S.E. end of **OVAKA**, the water shallows more, making it possible to anchor here even though it is a lee shore. **OVALAU** and the reefs to the east of this anchorage keep sea down.

This is a very exposed anchorage, thus would be worrisome in unsettled weather. Use this as a day stop only.

OVALUA is in the shallow area to the east and provides another good picnic beach with good snorkelling. Anchor about 100 yards offshore to the west of the island after approaching from the N.W. to the south of Ovalau the water shallows dramatically, accommodating only small of shallow draft boats.

(41) MOUNU is the South pacific Island of your dreams. It is lush, small and surrounded by sandy beach. Walk around the island or through the bush to find grassy glades shaded by tall coconut trees. Mounu Island is a resort island and before approaching to anchor, it is advised you make contact with the resort first so not to cause any inconvenience to the guests. Mounu is very exposed and therefore, days stop only. Approach from the N.W., keeping a sharp lookout and proceed as far south on the west shore as possible until the water shallows. Anchor on a sandy bottom in about 20 feet of water. Approach Mounu in the dinghy from the west avoiding the fringe reef, to land on a fine sandy white beach.

HAZARD - a most dangerous reef lies N.E. of Ovaka. This is now marked on the most recent Hydrographic Charts of the Vava'u group.

(42) FONUA ONE"ONE is a day anchorage in good weather only. Approach with extreme caution.

CHART# 4, 5, & 6

TAUNGA - is one of the smallest inhabited island of the group and it has some excellent beaches and good diving on the south end.

(21) This is the only good overnight anchorage stop in this area. It is protected when southerly and westerly winds are blowing.

(22) The anchorage off the village is only a day stop and it is protected on two sides by extensive reefs that dry at low tide. Approach this anchorage from the west and head roughly for the middle of the island. As you get closer, steer east for the coral wharf. Once between the two reefs, proceed slowly until in 30 feet of water. You may then anchor with adequate swinging room.

DO NOT GO IN AS FAR AS THE WOODEN STAKES. THESE MARK A CHANNEL OF ABOUT FOUR DEPTH TO THE WHARF.

(23) The best beaching and diving are accessible from a daytime anchorage to the west of the pass between Ngau and Pau. This anchorage requires good light to enter and to avoid fouling your anchor in coral. Be cautious, as the water is either very deep or very shallow. At high tide the reefs are awash and the anchorage can be rocky. At low tide you are protected by the drying reef. Diving is good all round this anchorage. The beach on Pau is excellent and another on the S.E. end of Ngau provides a good hiking expedition. Go north until you reach the isthmus then cross to the village.

(24) This is one of the most beautiful beaches in all of the Vava'u group. Enter from the southern end of the beach and be sure to proceed slowly as there are some coral heads. If the southeasterly's are strong, this anchorage is very exposed and can be rough, therefore, use only as a day anchorage.

FANUA TAPU PASSAGE - Going east at longitude 174 is similar to moving from the West Indies to the Bahamas; the shallow areas where good sunlight and eyeball navigation are necessary to avoid the numerous reefs and shallows.

The passage of Fanua Tapu is not too difficult if care is taken. The channel is deep throughout with a minimum of 12 feet at low tide. Plan to negotiate the pass in bright, high sunlight and use the charter to keep you bearings and orientation on the island of Fanua Tapu itself and Lautala. Finding the passage is easiest if you depart West of Lautala and steer 120 for about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile. You should then see the s-shaped channel south of the small island of Fanua Tapu.

You will see the two starboard markers quite easily but stay out of the reef area until you are able to line up both makers. Proceed in and as you close on them leave both to starboard by approximately 50 feet (just over one boat length). Immediately on passing the inner marker turn to 90 magnetic. From here you will easily see the buoy to port by a couple of boat length (70 to 100ft). Once past it make a turn

to 10 magnetic as indicated on the detail charter in guide.

To return, again follow the course instructions on the chart. Basically, put the apparent headland of OFU on the stern and the island of Fua'amotu (#33) on the bow.

In the eastern region around OFU there are several anchorages protected from the normal S.E. trades. Near the village of Makave there is excellent anchorage and it is well protected in most all weather.

(25) MAKAVE - on Vava'u, is only 1 ½ miles from our base. During an easterly anchor on the east shore of this bay. There is an excellent anchorage in about 20 feet of water shown on the chart. Be aware of a very extensive shallow area, which extends nearly ½ mile out from the beach on the N.W. shore. This area dries at low tide to become a walkway.

Should you wish to explore the village of Neiafu from this anchorage, leave the yacht anchored and dinghy to the S.W. end of the bay. Anchor the dinghy over the coral shelf and leave it there. Walk north, around the edge of the bay until you come to the road which leads a short way of the hill into town. Do not, even at high tide, take the dinghy into the back of the bay where the road is as you most likely have to carry the dinghy the ½ mile back over the dried reef to get to open water again.

(26), (27) & (28) 'OLO'UA, MAFANA & OFU - These anchorages have similar anchorages, all three offer shelter on the west shore. Ofu is by far the most scenic, offers the best anchorage and is known for excellent shelling. Locals say that shells found on Ofu are not found anywhere else in the world. Between Ofu and Mafana is a small unnamed island but the owners of the house do not appreciate visitors. This island is private so please respect their privacy and stay away.

(29) Nearby, **EUEIKI** is a wonderful daytime stop. The island is very steep. Keep a close watch on your boat at all times. At the bottom of the beach on the western side of this island are rocks and caves, which open into a "valley" full of cycads, one of the earliest forms of plant life. Walking into this "valley" is like

walking into the set of Jurassic Park. It's just amazing.

(30) KENUTU is the most easterly of the islands and is difficult to approach.

Rounding Ofu be careful to avoid the coral patches off the S.E. point. There are several that dry at low tide. Proceed north for nearly ½ mile until you are just past the large patch of coral sited off the centre of the eastern shore of Ofu. From here, to starboard you will notice a deep-water channel, which will take you into the protected beach of Kenutu. It is advised that this passage is made then the sun is high in the sky or behind and that a lookout be positioned on the bow to watch for coral heads.

On the beach at Kenutu you will find the Berlin bar where you can relax with a cool drink and possibly even book in for a meal. The island is over grown with bush and trees yet the beach is very attractive. The large area of coral reef dries at low tide can yield good shellfish. The exposed reef is excellent for experienced divers but be prepared, as it is difficult getting in and out with the surge. The islands of Umuna and Faioa to the north can be visited by dinghy from this anchorage. In the centre of Umuna lies a very steep giant cave. A visit to Kenutu would not be complete without a walk to the other side of the island to view the beautiful surf crashing against the high cliffs. A path to the other side of the island can be found at the southern end of the beach.

CHARTS# 7 & 8

In the south-eastern area of the Vava'u group it is possible to sail south inside thereof and chain of small island to the most southern island of Maninita. The chart is not totally accurate along this route. Eyeball navigation is necessary with a constant lookout on the bow. Some of the reefs shown are actually islands and in some areas, there are extensive reefs where none are indicated on the charts. It would be foolish to try this passage on a cloudy day or when a large sea is running.

(31) MANINITA - The intricate net of reefs which make Maninita so dangerous for yachts to approach is also responsible for making it one of the most beautiful and interesting of

islands. The seawater, caught in the reef pools, gives the illusion of being on different levels so that there is the feeling of sailing up stairs as the island is approached.

It will take less than half an hour to circle Maninita on the white sand beach, but you'll be tempted to linger far longer on going into the interior. It is like one vast room filled with brilliant green light filtering down from the big leafed Puko trees which provide an airy ceiling. Fishing around the island is good and the many reefs provide rewarding snorkelling.

Maninita is a difficult anchorage and generally it is wise to have local knowledge when visiting here. However, for the experienced tropical sailor using caution, a daytime visit will be rewarding. We ask that you leave an experienced crewmember on board while others go ashore to snorkel. Do not attempt to anchor here when moderate or heavy ocean swells are present. This observation is true for all of the small southern islands where anchoring becomes not only difficult but also dangerous in high wave conditions.

Other small islands in this area are very attractive and offer excellent snorkelling.

These islands are **LUA UI (34)** and **LUA UI VAHA (35)**.

(32) 'EUAKAFA is a high island with a large plateau about 300 feet high. It is a good place to spend an entire day with good beaches on the N.E. side, good snorkelling and hiking. The best anchoring at 'Euakafa is on the North Side, but do try to find a sandy patch for the anchor. This is very exposed thus daytime stop only.

There is a second anchorage on 'Euakafa on the west side. On the chart, just off the N.W. edge of the fringing island coral is a small coral patch. It is possible to anchor just to the north and east of this patch or directly to its south. To approach the southern position from the north, leave the patch on your port side, pass over an area marked on the chart as "4" fathoms and anchor just south of the patch. From here there is good access to the beaches on 'Euakafa or snorkelling on the reefs nearby. Also take the dinghy over to the banks of the reef to the west where you may snorkel from the dinghy on the reef tops and swim along the edge of the drop off. The underwater scenery

is very attractive over this drop off. Often you will be swimming among the many colourful schools of small fish.

(33) FUA'AMOTU is a day anchorage in good weather but anchor with care.

(34) LUA UI is a small island 1 ½ miles S.W. of 'Euakafa and is surrounded by coral for about fifty yards offshore. There are isolated coral heads in the shallow water; this is a good lunch and diving spot with the best anchorage on the west side.

"Lua" is Tongan for underwater reef or shallows, so when you sail about the Luas, be warned. Lua Ui means "the calling reef" and Lua Ui Vaha, "the reef calling over the sea". Lua Hiapo is named for the paper mulberry tree, the bark of which Tongans make Tapa. Lua Fuleheu is named for an attractive small bird, the honeysucker, which is often found there.

(35) LUA UI VAHA is a small island west to southwest of Fua'amotu and two miles south of 'Euakafa. The island is surrounded by coral with some isolated heads one hundred yards offshore and it is a good daytime anchorage for diving.

(36) LUAHIAPU is a day anchorage in good weather and is one of the easier to use. Anchor as indicated inside the 'Hook' of coral to the west of the island on the sandy patch there. Access to the island by dinghy is then quite easy.

(37) LUA FULEHEU is a difficult day anchorage in good weather. Please note that none of the small southern island is in any way suitable as overnight anchorages. Caution and care should always be exercised when anchoring at any of these southern islands. Anchoring should not be attempted if the incoming ocean swells are large. Ovaka is south of Vaka'eitu and is generally exposed, making it uncomfortable as an overnight anchorage. In steady S.E. trades, it is possible to anchor in the three bays on the north side. These are over 40 feet deep by the most easterly of the three is shallower and is by far the best.

(42) LAUTAFITO - this is a good daytime anchorage and is easier to approach than many

of the other smaller islands. However, the advice on anchoring given for *Maninita* still applies to this entire area.