Tonga, ‘19

Swimming with Humpback Whales

Annual tours to Vava’u, Tonga
One of the Ocean’s Greatest Wildlife encounters

HIGHLIGHTS: 5 Days Snorkelling with Humpback Whales and their Calves in Vava’u. Warm, clear water, friendly people, great food, Tongan feast, Tropical island snorkelling & cultural experiences

Duration: 9 days  
Trip Code: 5V19  
Dates: 26th Aug – 4th Sept, 2019

Includes:
- 5 Whale Days
- International airfares, Breakfasts, Island Feast, Transfers & Tours

Tour Leader: Jayne Jenkins

Cost:
- $5,190- Hotel Accommodation
- $5,990 - Tongan Beach Resort (Availability on request)

Join Quest Tours’ Whale and Dolphin experts and enjoy one of Nature’s greatest interactive Wildlife experiences. We are the longest running LICENCED Travel Agent escorting tours to Vava’u.

The privilege of Swimming with these gentle, intelligent mammals is truly life altering. To have a mother Humpback Whale, weighing 50 tonnes, nudge her precious baby towards us, showing off her newly born calf, is beyond belief, let alone description.

This experience is guaranteed to be remarkable and unique. 2019 will be our 18th season escorting our valued travellers to Vava’u to Swim with the Humpback Whales.
Your itinerary

Monday, 26th August, 2019
Depart Sydney SYD 17:50 on FJ910
(Flight duration 3hr 55m – Fiji is 2 hours ahead of Sydney)

Tuesday, 27th August, 2019 (B) (Lunch and dinner at own expense)
Depart Nadi (NAN) 0800 Arrive Vava’u (VAV) at 1010 (Flight time 2 hours 10 mins – Tonga is 1 hour ahead of Fiji)
You will be transferred to the centre of town for 7 nights’ standard, twin share accommodation including breakfasts.

Wednesday, 28th Aug – Fri, 30th Aug, 2019 (B, L onboard) (Dinners at own expense)
For everyone: Enjoy three days of Whale Watching around the beautiful islands of Vava’u. These days are our opportunity to enjoy the privilege of snorkeling with Humpback Whales.
Light lunch, fruit platters & refreshments are enjoyed whilst anchored off white sandy beaches. There will be many opportunities for snorkelling over tropical reefs and in open sea caves in the crystal clear water. It all adds up to being the best days out on the water imaginable.
Friday we enjoy a traditional Tongan feast at our hotel, The Puatuakanave

Saturday 31st & Sunday 1st September, 2019 (B, L) (Dinner at own expense)
Enjoy the weekend off, this can be spent checking out the local cafes and utilising the wifi spots. By law Sunday is a day of rest. Going to one of the local churches on Sunday morning (not compulsory) is very special; this singing will be one of your fondest memories of Vava’u. This day will also include a special brunch at a lovely cafe in town.

Monday 2nd September – Tuesday 3rd September 2019 (B, L onboard) (Dinner at own expense)
These are your final days of Whale Watching and snorkeling. Once again lunch and fruit platters provided, amongst the crystal clear waters.

Wednesday, 4th September, 2019 (B) (Lunch and Dinner at own expense)
Today we bid a fond farewell to the island paradise of Vava’u, enjoying a lazy morning with a 1210 departure.
Arriving NAN at 1330 (2 hours 20 min flight time)
5 hour layover
Depart NAN 1830 Arriving SYD 2125 (4 hour 50 min flight time)
(Flight times are as at August, 2016 and subject to change at the whim of the airlines).
The Humpback Whales of Vava’u

What to expect while on tour…

You will be accompanied by one of our conscientious, experienced guides to ensure your holiday runs smoothly.

Our Whale Watching days will begin early in the morning to be first out to the whale calving grounds, departing usually between 7 and 8 am.

There will be a maximum of SEVEN passengers onboard, plus the Guide and Crew. The vessel is for our exclusive use only. Four swimmers plus an accredited Tongan guide are allowed in the water at any one time. And with no more than 2 groups of swimmers onboard, you will have the maximum chance of enjoying the best possible experience.

You will be snorkelling with the Whales in open-ocean. You should have or, be willing to acquire adequate snorkelling skills, and undertake as much open ocean snorkelling experience before travelling to Tonga, to ensure you enjoy your time to the maximum.

You will need your own snorkelling gear; ask us for advice on this, as it is essential that your equipment is suitable for the tour.

The water will be around 24- 26 degrees, depending on currents and air temperature. Air temperature will be around 28-30 degrees, and quite humid. This being said, some seasons we have had cooler weather, around the 25 degree mark.

Cafes, Coffee Shops & Internet

There are a number of quality cafes available throughout Neiafu – we will be visiting these as a group according to the entertainment on offer on specific nights. Some nights during your stay will be at leisure to dine at a café of your choice.

Most cafes have internet facilities available for use by customers or, alternatively, there is an internet café with more reliable internet options at a small cost.
Vava’u is an island group of one large island and 40 smaller islands in Tonga. Vava’u rises 204 metres above sea level at Mt Talau. The capital is Neiafu, and has a population of around 6000 people.

We will be operating out of the Port of Refuge harbour, which is one of the best, most protected harbours in the world.

The Vava’u Island group in the Kingdom of Tonga is a spectacular tropical island paradise in the Pacific Ocean. It has a year-round climate suitable for swimming, snorkeling, diving and sailing. Some islands are ringed by white sand beaches while others have tropical forests, sea-level caves, and dramatic limestone cliffs with breathtaking vistas.

Remote and truly unspoiled, the waters around Vava’u are crystal clear with visibility exceeding 30 metres. Most of the islands are uninhabited, a few have villages, a few have very small unique resorts with exceptional food. There is abundant sea life with over 100 species of colorful tropical fish, giant clams, manta rays, sea turtles, spinner dolphins, and July-October the Humpback whales!

Truly a paradise, with the only Polynesian Monarchy, this is a remarkable place to explore.
Accommodation

**The Puataukanave Hotel**

$5,190 Whale Snorkeller  
Single supplement $600 per person

Located right in the centre of town, this lovely hotel has spectacular views of the harbour and is an easy walk to all the main cafes and attractions.  
Each room has two comfortable beds and an ensuite bathroom.  
We will be in the Deluxe section of the hotel, which has been well received by our travelers in previous years.

**The Tongan Beach Resort**

$5,990 Whale Snorkeller  
Single & triple supplement price available on request

The resort is nestled on the beach front of the island of ‘Utungake. There is safe swimming at all tides and a water taxi service to Neiafu and back.

This resort spans 180 metres of beachfront, with all rooms enjoying views of the golden sand beach and the Port of Refuge Harbour.

This resort is located out of town, and you will be picked up from the Resort’s private jetty for Whale Swim days and SCUBA Diving.

The resort has a licenced restaurant and a bar right on the beach.

*These are the 2 different accommodation types to choose from – please indicate your preference on the booking form.*
Fact File

What to Expect from Quest Tours prior to Departure…

We will book your airfares, both domestic (if required) and international, and organise your accommodation, transfers and Whale experiences.

You can expect a detailed packing list and travel updates in the weeks leading up to your departure date.

**Included:**

- International airfares ex. Sydney (flights available ex. Brisbane & Melbourne for +$))
- 1 nights twin share accommodation in Nadi, Fiji
- 7 nights twin share accommodation in Vava’u
- Breakfasts on Whale days
- 5 days Swimming with Humpback Whales incl. lunches onboard
- Traditional Tongan cultural feast
- Services of your Tour Leader, throughout your time in Vava’u and prior to the tour
- Qualified Whale Guides
- Airport to hotel transfers throughout tour

**Not included:**

- Meals & drink other than specified on the itinerary
- Gratuities/ souvenirs/ alcohol
- **Personal Travel Insurance (compulsory) – we recommend purchasing this as soon as you book**
  - Please indicate your preference on your booking form – travellers on our escorted tours receive a 25% discount on insurance premiums with our recommended travel insurance provider, SureSave
Born and raised in Wales, Jayne learnt to dive in the chilly waters along the rugged Welsh coastline before moving to Australia in 1973. As an avid diver and underwater photographer, Jayne is actively involved in many facets of the diving industry and have been for over three decades. Jayne worked for over ten years specialising in dive travel which led to work as a safety diver and researcher for various underwater film, television and photographic expeditions focusing on diving in the Pacific, including the cave diving spectacular Sanctum. This has given Jayne the opportunity to travel to many exciting dive locations around the world.

Jayne's passion and skill for underwater photography, for which she is best known has won her many awards and she remains a regular editorial contributor to Ocean Geographic Magazine.

Jayne has been a volunteer and the Vice President of the OWUSS in Australasia (Our World Underwater Scholarship Society - a scholarship sponsored by Rolex for young underwater enthusiasts) for the past ten years an also resident photographer /consultant with The Ocean Agency, former Catlin Seaview survey. This is fast becoming a game changing creative scientific project. Using specially designed technology, the Catlin Seaview Survey recorded and revealed the world’s oceans and reefs like never before, in high-resolution, 360-degree panoramic vision. This independent, baseline, scientific study of the world’s oceans will enable the global public to see change over time and start planning for the future.

To be involved in such significant work gives Jayne much pleasure and she believes combining science and creativity is key to helping protect the oceans.

Jayne feels privileged to be one of three Australian females inducted into The Woman Divers Hall of Fame and Jayne is also proud to be a Fellow International of the world famous Explorers Club.

Jayne hopes her drive and enthusiasm for the ocean has inspired countless individuals to take up diving and to appreciate and protect the oceans and loves nothing more than sharing her love of the oceans with others.
The fine print…

It is important to note that for international departures check in is no later than two hours prior to departure. Please ensure that all departure / arrival timings indicated are correct, as these are subject to change without notice.

Your passport must have a minimum of 6 months validity from day of departure.

Costs and flights are as at August, 2018 and are subject to fluctuations in exchange rate - $AU 1.00 = $TOP 1.60

Quest Tours – General Diving and Snorkelling Rules

Obviously on all dive and snorkelling tours, safety is our main concern. The quality of diving is guaranteed. Tonga has incredible reef diving, however, it is relatively remote compared to much of the developed world. The following guidelines will help you enjoy your tour and stay safe on your holiday.

For Snorkellers/ Free Divers
Swimming with whales is a surface snorkelling activity only. Lead weights are not required. Should you need them they are available to hire.

Good quality, well fitting snorkelling fins (not kick fins) are essential. A well-fitted mask that has been treated so it does not fog will keep you comfortable, and we strongly recommend a high-quality snorkel with a splashguard and a purge valve.

Please ask us for advice regarding all of this equipment. We have packages exclusively available for our tour participants at $90.

Your guide on the tour is trained for in-water rescues and emergency first aid.

It is essential that you practice your snorkeling skills in open ocean BEFORE you depart as much as possible.

Quest Tours – Forster NSW Australia (Licence number: 2TA 10493)

Bookings
To book onto the tour you will need to supply a completed booking form, together with a photocopy of your passport and a $1500 non-refundable deposit.

We have booked the whale watch and diving operation for the height of the whale watch season, early bookings are essential and will ensure your spot on the tour. Before booking please read thoroughly the BOOKING CONDITIONS as published on our websites.

Late bookings may incur a flight surcharge

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours. We strongly recommend taking out travel insurance at the same time as paying your deposit. SureSave, our recommended insurance provider, will cover you at the time of taking out your policy and until your tour’s return date. We can arrange a quote for you, please let us know at the time of booking if you would like this.

We suggest carefully checking conditions of any other travel insurance you may be considering.

Please note that DAN Insurance does not cover you for things such as flight cancellations, lost baggage or similar. They only cover you for diving related injuries. We recommend and insist on additional, comprehensive insurance to cover cancellations, airline changes and baggage in conjunction with DAN.
The Whales of Vava’u, 2019

Unparalleled in-water Experience

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