



Travel Stories by Amaru & Suzanne



We've found paradise on Viwa Island...

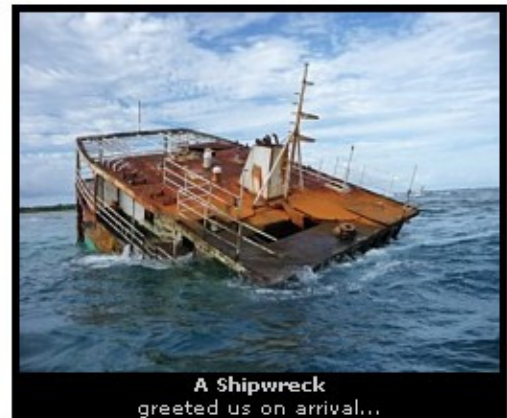
by Amaru & Suzanne, May 4th 2010

Viwa island, to get here we had to get a bit off the beaten track... but it was really worth it!

Travelling between the islands in the Yasawas is quite easy as there are large catamarans to ship you around. On these ships you barely feel the movement of the ocean and it's only if you were to board a smaller boat that this might be an issue.

Well, Viwa island is not along the Catamaran path so you have to board a fairly small boat for the last 45min of travel. On the day we choose to cross the ocean it was a bit rocky and we were heaving up and down quite a bit but luckily we made it to Viwa without any incidents ;)

The island is surrounded by a massive reef and you could see some huge waves breaking as they reached the reef. Manouvering our way into the island we passed a shipwreck that's been there for about a year, apparently it was way overloaded and couldn't make it. We asked if anyone was going to salvage it and they said yes, soon... Fiji Time!



A Shipwreck
greeted us on arrival...



The staff greeted us
with welcome songs

Our greeting here was even more impressive than it had been on our previous island. We had about 10 people on the beach singing to us, handing us leis and taking us up to the restaurant for our complimentary drinks (also, one of the great things everywhere in Fiji was that you didn't have to worry about your luggage, they carried it from the boat to your Bure... we could get used to this!).

As we arrived here in late afternoon we didn't bother with the ocean but instead jumped into the pool straight away to relax for a bit...

After pool and shower we were back at the main building for a few drinks (yup, Happy Hour again!). But before that I had to have a look at the shop... and I was lucky to find exactly what I was looking for, some Aqua Ear. Yup, all that snorkelling gave me swimmers ear...

Anyway, a few drops of the Aqua Ear solutions per day and I was good to go again... but I still decided to wait a few more days before doing any dives...

Over the next few days we spent our time going between the pool and the beach, just doing as little as possible... One of the few things we did was that we joined the staff in one of their village visits.

The island contains 3 villages and we were going to visit the one on the far end of the island. To get there we had to hike through the island which took around an hour. At least the island is flat so we didn't have to worry about hills ;) And, before we got there our guide took us aside so that we could have a coconut break. He showed us the best way to collect, peel and open the coconuts to be able to access the coconut water.



Once we reached the village we were all seated and were given tea and some sweet breads by the local villagers. We were also given the opportunities to shop some local hand made goods from them as well...

We were not sure what we could purchase as it's tough knowing what you can and can't bring back into Australia. We still wanted to support the villagers so we decided to purchase what we wanted and then we would just have to see if we could bring it into the country or not (we could ;))

That evening back at the resort, after dinner, we had our first Kava Ceremony... The drink is made from the root of the Kava plant. The root is dried and ground into fine powder, this is then soaked with water and it's ready to drink.

So, what does it taste like? Well, if you can imagine what muddy water tastes like you're close... it's not very tasty!

That evening we also had a great hermit crab race. We were all allowed to place bets on our very own hermit crab and prizes were awarded to the winner, runner-up and to the very last hermit crab... we came second last :(

On our last morning I decided to finally do a dive. I hadn't gotten around to it until now as I was making sure I was 100% first. The dive went well with no problems... the dive site itself wasn't all that interesting though and the snorkeling at the previous island was better. But at least I managed to see a couple of sharks... so the dive wasn't a total loss!



When our time came to leave the island we didn't want to leave... we really liked this place. The beach was outstanding, the people so friendly and the food had been great as well.

But we were also keen on seeing what the next place would be like so we got back on the boat and after a few hours we reached mainland once more.

We had to come back to the mainland as it was too late to go back out to our next destination. The plus side of that was that we were staying in the resort next door to some friends - Nat, Sam and Keira. It's quite funny that we only live a few suburbs from each other in Sydney but haven't been able to catch up for a few years... we had to come all the way to Fiji to meet again ;)

Viwa was such a great island that we would happily return in the future... Sure it might be a bit further away than the other islands in the Yasawas but it's all worth it in the end!



Happy Hour again...
We didn't miss a single one ;)



Aqua Ear...
Too much snorkelling I think



We have a pool this time
Nice to mix ocean with some pool time



But in case you don't like the pool
We have a pretty good beach here!



The beach at Viwa
was definately its best feature



Back in the water again...
There's no way to keep her out ;)



We're trekking to a local village
On the other side of the island



Halfway and it's time for a drink
Bring on the coconuts



Sako is showing us
how to access the drink



Coconut water
Refreshing and tasty!



At the local village
Sitting down for some local made tea



After the tea it's shopping time
The villagers show us their goods...



The last hurricane was in December 2009
and we can still see the evidence



The village boys
Very playful...



We're leaving the village by boat
Everyone is very friendly...



We're having some Kokoda for lunch
A Fijian ceviche with coconut milk... YUM!



It's dinner time...
We were all given frangipanis to wear!



It's Kava Time!
The traditional drink!



Kava
Tastes like muddy water...



I went back for more...
Not that I liked it... but it's what you do ;)



Hermit Crab Race
The participants and their bids



Our guys came second last...
At least with last you win something



Walking along the beach
One of our activities on the island



No relaxing on hammocks this time
The ones at the other island were better



I got to do some diving here
and found some cute clownfish



I also found a couple of sharks
Only a small white tip though



A much needed massage
on our porch



Suz is playing with my lobster
or whatever was left of it ;)



Farewell songs were sung
the night before departure



We had to travel all the way to Fiji
to meet up with Nat and Sam