

**BACKER'S
GUIDE**



BACKER'S GUIDE SUMMARY
Of
Fiji Islands Backpacker's Association's
Traveler & Industry Survey



Backpacker/Independent Travellers in Fiji 2010

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FORWARD

In Sep 2010, a research team from Monash University undertook the primary phase of data collection for a research project on behalf of Tourism Fiji and Fiji Islands Backpacker Association (F.I.B.A). The broad objective of the study was to profile the independent traveller/backpacker market in the country, identify their motivations and the characteristics of their travel behaviour. The study was designed to replicate a research project that was undertaken by Jarvis in 2006.

The survey was completed face to face and was based on a self-completion questionnaire. The research was conducted primarily in accommodation locations that offered dormitory style lodgings as well as private rooms. In addition, a limited number of surveys were collected on the ferry to the Yasawa and Mamanuca Islands.

The following is an abbreviated version of the full survey results compiled for Tourism Fiji and the Fiji Island Backpacker Association. They have been condensed by Backer's Guide in a way that we hope and feel highlights many interesting facts and considerations of visitors to Fiji.



Fiji Visitor Survey Highlights

Part A: Nationality, Travel Style and Overall Trip

Nationality

A total of 26 different nationalities participated in the study. Europe remains the key source region for independent travellers/backpackers, accounting for over 70% of the sample. Within this the UK is the dominant market, 34% with Germany accounting for 14.4%

The various types of Nationality, in percentage, who entered Fiji were:

UK	34.0	Sweden	2.5
Germany	14.4	Italy	1.8
Australia	12.0	Canada	1.8
USA	6.1	Austria	1.8
New Zealand	4.0	Netherlands	1.5
France	3.7	Spain	0.9
Ireland	3.4	Belgium	0.3
Switzerland	3.1	Finland	0.3
Denmark	2.8	South Africa	0.3
Others	5.1		

Age

The sample had quite a wide age range from 18-67, with the overall average being 28 years old. Significantly 59.4% of the samples were females. This indicates that Fiji is a female friendly travelling environment.

Working Holiday

The role of the Working Holiday Maker visa for Australia and New Zealand is significant, with 30.4% of the sample travelling on such a visa (27.7% from the Australian WHM visa)

What Do You Call Yourself?

Only 44.6% of the sample self define themselves as a 'backpacker' with 24.6% preferring the term independent traveller. The importance of this finding is that Tourism Fiji in the IVS uses a self-definition to identify backpackers. Clearly this underestimates the market. A better definition could be associated with defining the market according to where they stayed, such as "Did you stay in accommodation that also offered dormitory style accommodation?"



Intentions

- 71.2% like to travel independently, making all travel decisions by themselves, meeting and interacting with locals as much as possible, using a traveller's guidebook for reference, but preferring to stay in comfortable accommodation.
- 81.7% said they wanted to experience 'authentic' cultures outside their home country
- 86.6% said they wanted to take a break from life/work at home
- 60% will spend time in Australia or New Zealand either before or after visiting Fiji

Source of Fiji Information

- 52% used internet travel sites to gain information on Fiji e.g. Trip Advisor or Hostel world
- 75% were highly influenced by information acquired on the Internet from search engines, travel blogs or travel websites
- 55.9% took 'Word of Mouth' advice from friends and fellow travellers
- 36.0% used Travel Guidebooks

Average Length of Trip / Visit

Fiji is generally a part of a longer trip with the average time away from home for all travellers being 144 days, of which the average length of stay in Fiji was 12.4 nights. (Note Australian and New Zealand residents travel away from home for significantly less time)

South Pacific Visit

Fiji is clearly integrated with the traveller market in New Zealand and Australia, with 27.2% of the sample coming from Fiji from Australia and 28.7% coming from New Zealand





Average Spending

The spend per day was estimated at \$139.43 FJD.

(Note that this is quite high as the majority of the 'Phase one' sample came from the Yasawa Islands which is a more expensive traveller region than the mainland. In addition, a number of traveller resorts in the Yasawas have also invested in higher yield bures in recent years.)

The estimates which are spent daily by one traveller on the following are:



Accommodation**	59.91 FJD\$
Activities and Entertainment	3.52 FJD\$
Tours	7.21 FJD\$
Food & Drink	46.21 FJD\$
Shopping	3.88 FJD\$
Transport	18.70 FJD\$
Total	139.43 FJD\$ (75 AUD\$)

**Main Island accommodation would generally reduce the accommodation element by approximately 50% to 60% or 30.00 to 35.00 FJD\$ (15.00 to 17.00 AUD\$). Other budget line items also would also likely be less.

Enjoyment

Overall 93.6% of the sample enjoyed their experience in Fiji and would recommend it to friends.





Part B: Fiji – Where, What, How

Accommodation Choices

The following are percentages of the types of accommodation used (or intend to) by backpackers in Fiji:

Backpackers hostel/resort	85.5%
Individual Cabins`	26.2%
2-3 Star Resort/Hotel	18.8%
4-5 Star Resort/Hotel	11.4%
Tents (Camping)	3.4%
Family/Friends	3.4%
Rented Apartment	1.5%
Other (Homestay, couch surfing, village huts)	3.4%

Fiji Areas Visited

A map of Fiji was referred to and the following are percentages of the regions which most visitors stayed overnight in:

Western Main Island (Nadi/Lautoka)	92.9%
Yasawa Islands	83.6%
Mamanuca Islands	42.9%
Southern Main Island (Coral Coast/Pacific Harbour)	25.8%
Eastern Main Island (Suva)	10.5%
Northern Main Island (Rakiraki Nananua I Ra)	7.4%
Vanua Levu (Savusavu)	5.6%
Levuka (Ovalau)	2.2%
Taveuni	2.2%
Kadavu Islands	0.6%
Other Regions	2.8%



Fiji Activities Participated

The following are percentages of the activities that were most popular during their stay in Fiji:

Diving/Snorkelling	87.8%
Swimming	83.7%
Village Visits	54.5%
Guided Tours	42.6%
Canoeing/Kayaking	46.4%
Restaurant Dining	41.8%
Bars/Pubs/Clubs	42.3%
Hiking	39.2%
Shopping	27.3%
Fishing	22.3%
Historical Walking	8.6%
Rafting	8.5%
Museums/Galleries	7.2%
Surfing	6.9%
Others (Horse Riding, Caving, Jewellery Making)	2.4%



Part C: Attitudes to Fiji

69.6% were attracted to Fiji because it's an undiscovered travel destination

86.0% were attracted because they wanted to relax on the tropical beach

93.6% had a good experience in Fiji and would definitely recommend it to friends

64.7% agreed that Fiji offers good value for their travel budget

94.2% were proud to say that Fijian people had indeed been very welcoming

56.8% had wanted to spend more time on their current trip



Part D: Demographics & Return Intent

Return to Fiji Again?

Over 50% of visitors arriving on our shores intend to return to Fiji before and within 5 years

Education Level

62% are University graduates or higher degree

Profession

The following best describes the traveller's most recent career occupation

Professional e.g. Accountant, Doctor, Lawyer and Teacher at 53%
Student at a percentage of 26.0

Male or Female?

Fiji was most visited by females in that year at a percentage of 59.4 and males at 40.6%

Type of Visa

The following are percentages of visas (Australian Working Holiday Maker or Australian Student) which visitors entered the country with:

- 61.6% did not need a visa
- 27.7% entered with WHM (Aus)
- 7.2% on Student Visa (Aus)
- 2.7% on WHM (NZ)
- 0.7% came on student visa (NZ)





Companionship

- 33.9% travelled all the way here with friends from home,
- 31.7% with a partner
- 22.6% came alone
- 7.5% with friends they met on the road
- 4.4% with family

How the Trip Was Arranged

The following were the ways in which people arranged time to travel to their trip to Fiji:

- 21.8% quit their career job to travel
- 20.5% came on paid holiday
- 12.0% just completed their degree at University
- 11.4% were on extended leave
- 9.5% just completed a semester/year of study at University
- 6.3% quit their temporary job, to go travelling after completing University
- 6.0% were studying in Aus and NZ and were in Fiji for a holiday
- 4.4% quit their temporary job, to go travelling after completing High School
- 3.5% completed a period of study at High school
- 2.8% had other reasons and about 1.9% was either unemployed or retired.

