



CHASING KADAVU IN FOUR DAYS

Sea kayaking Fiji with Tamarillo Adventure Travel

By DRUE SLATTER
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We had four days to cover an area so untouched; it's often overlooked on maps of Fiji. It sits hidden at the bottom of the Fiji group, a collection of islands brimming with adventure and thoroughly underestimated. Only four days? The Kadavu Group, made up of Fiji's fourth largest island (Kadavu), Ono, Galoa and a number of smaller islets, really requires a lifetime of exploring. Prior to our trip down south, conversations with travellers and locals alike were colored with a certain enchantment that piqued my curiosity. Why was everyone so enthralled by this place when I had heard so little about it, even as a local?

DAY ONE

After descending into Vunisea Airport, we are picked up by Kadavu Tourism's chairman, Tom Bashaw and transported to our first stop by sea. There is only a short stretch of road running from one side of the airport on Kadavu Island

and absolutely no roads on Ono. Water taxis are the primary mode of transport.

"I've seen kids running outboard motors here almost before they can walk," joked Tom.

We had come to chase the outdoor thrills that this southern island has to offer, and since Kadavu's waters cover one of the largest barrier reefs in the world our first stop was Matana Beach Resort, also known as Dive Kadavu. Breakfast was spent looking over the ten bungalows and a pristine oceanfront, discussing more than 40 spectacular dive sites with the inhouse dive master. Yellow Wall, Canyon and Crazy Maze are just a handful of the sites on offer; the furthest being only a 15-minute boat ride away and the nearest snorkeling spot 20 feet from where we're standing.

Bidding farewell to the crew of Dive Kadavu, it's a 10-minute boat ride to the intriguing Papageno Resort. Approaching by sea, my attention was drawn to a bright red roofed, stone walled meeting house. Warm rosy hues permeate the resort. Burgundy lines the bungalows and cherry red flowers line the paths between

bures. 'Connect Mind, Body and Spirit,' is Papageno's catchphrase and it accommodates many a yoga retreat and kayaking group. The eclectic interior of the bures was worth lingering over as we passed through the resort on our way to a delicious lunch of fresh fish curry in the restaurant. Coconut furniture from Fiji's Pacific Green, wall hangings from Mexico and bark cloth from Tonga highlight the cultural richness of the resort while it is secluded enough to allow people to enjoy the atmosphere with their group or partner, hidden from the world.

We decided to spend our first night at Oneta Resort on Ono Island, best known for its stellar fishing tours (and funky bamboo showers, in my opinion). Right next-door is Koromakawa Resort, their sole guesthouse a perfect romantic getaway for newlyweds or longtime lovers. I was overwhelmed by the diversity of accommodation options in the Kadavu Group and thrilled by the beauty of these islands, and our adventure activities hadn't even started yet! *Fiji Link flies to Kadavu from Nadi five times a week except on Wednesdays and Thursdays.*