



ROTUMA CRUISING INFORMATION

Forgotten in the vastness of the South Pacific there you will find a small island calling *Rotuma*. If you love secluded, sleepy islands, this is the right place. Like a large tropical garden, the island is an absolute natural paradise, with crystal clear water, lots of fish, beautiful corals, excellent fruits and friendly habitants, which rejoices when rarely once a yacht anchors here. Amazing, because Rotuma has an excellent anchor bay and here you can clear in and out to Fiji. So, this is one of our insider tips; if it fits in your program it's absolutely worth to see!

We are not native English speakers, so sorry about all the grammatical mistakes. In the download sections on our website www.tuvalubarcelona.es you will find the original version in German. Our Cruising information's for sailors are treating only what we have seen, where we have been. Photos and lyrics (in German and Spanish, but not in English) can be found in our blog. But you must find out by yourselves if you like this island as much as we do...

BASIC INFORMATION

Weather & Communication

Over Rotuma often lies in the *South Pacific Convergence Zone*, so the weather is changing between the Fiji - Rotuma - Tuvalu. With this patterns one frequently travels from one weather system to the other, and can get rain, thunderstorms and winds from different directions. In addition to the evolution of the prevailing SE winds (which mainly complicate the ride to the south and not so much to the north), one should observe in detail the development of the convergence zone. Nevertheless; we did not see any lightning's on our trips between Fiji, Funafuti (Tuvalu) and Rotuma...

Everything else on the subject of weather systems, weather resources, on-board communication, special navigation techniques, nautical charts, cruising guides, literature in the South Pacific can you download on our website in a separate PDF (only in German) WETTER & KOMMUNIKATION IM SÜDPAZIFIK.

Crossing

We arrived to Rotuma coming over from Funafuti (Tuvalu Island) in August 2017. For meteorological reasons, a stop here in the middle of the crossing to the Yasawa Islands makes sense in Fiji - and in the opposite direction as well. Because here you can wait again for the next good weather window for the next 250 miles. Of course, the island is about 10 degrees away from the direct line, but this is no problem when you get a better weather window and thus better wind and wave conditions. But perhaps you also should stay and put here because this is a unique beautiful island...

Clearance

The island belongs political and administrative to Fiji.

Check in from Tuvalu

Even if the authorities in *Lautoka / Fiji* informed us in July 2017 differently (making there check out from Fiji), weeks later coming from Funafuti (Tuvalu Island) to Rotuma we could make the paperwork for check in to Fiji easily without problems (August 2017). This means almost completely, because it was not possible to issue the necessary *cruising permit*, because at this moment there was no representation of *customs* in Rotuma. But we were told that we can (and must!) do this later on in the first port of entry of Fiji mainland (i.e. Savusavu, Lautoka, Vuda)). On the way down you can anchor and stay, but you should be on a direct route to an official port of entry.

The officials of Rotuma showed up the day after our arrival in the small harbor basin on the NE of the island. The locals advise usually the authorities when (rarely) a ship is anchored here. The officers come aboard, which means you catch up them with the dinghy at the pier (they do not have their own boat). Then the whole procedure was fast and without any problems.

Check out internally to Fiji

When you leave again Rotuma with destination Fiji the official of the Bio Security needs to pass by again. To do this, the locals in the village can call by local phone to the authorities. The island is infested with fruit flies, so you can not bring any fruits to Fiji mainland. Understandably this will be controlled. Driving from Rotuma to Tuvalu (or vice versa) is not a problem; they have the same fruit flies there This restriction concerns only fruits; vegetables and coconuts are problem-free.

Check out for Tuvalu

If one goes from Fiji to Rotuma, according to what the officials in Rotuma has told us, it works like that:

A) Check out in Lautoka to Funafuti / Tuvalu at customs, but not at Immigration / Health / Biosecurity. When leaving finally Rotuma with destination to Tuvalu / Micronesia, check out with them definitely. So you can also stop on the way up the Yasawas, and then sail 250 miles to Rotuma with a good weather window from the north end of Yasawas. We sailed directly from Lautoka without any stop in Rotuma to Funafuti / Tuvalu, which is more complicated in terms of the weather (see above).

B) If the officials in Lautoka do not approve this procedure, then check out completely, and still go to Rotuma. As the officials in Rotuma have has expressly confirmed to us you will get a permit to stay a couple of days.

fees

The fees are as in Fiji. Important: If you *declare in* in Rotuma, you have to pay the fees in Fiji Dollar (cash!).

Language	English, own Polynesian dialect. <i>Bula Bula</i> is not announced here, but you say <i>noa'ia</i> .
Sevusevu	Sevusevu is not required despite the traditional lifestyle in Rotuma. The island belongs to Fiji, but is culturally a mix between Fiji and Micronesia.
Money	Fiji Dollar. It's not possible to get ore change money in Rotuma, there is no bank and no ATM. On the other hand; you can't spend much money here ...
Mobile Internet	Digicel Fiji with 3G, but no Vodafone Fiji. Digicel works with Internet, but there is no reception in the port / main anchorage of <i>Oinafa</i> . SIM cards can not be bought in Rotuma, so you have to bring them from Fiji if necessary. However <i>top up</i> is possible (at the Telecom in the <i>Government Station</i>). On request there you also can connect to the Internet with your own computer (at the Telecom). We have not done this, but the responsible employee has assured us that this is problem-free and we are welcome.
Web	www.rotuma.net http://www.tuvalubarcelona.es/index.php/category/2017/rotuma/ - our blog with pictures of Rotuma
Purchasing	Purchasing food and hardware is very limited in Rotuma. There are tiny shops in the small villages along the coastal road with the most necessary. In the village behind the port basin of <i>Oinafa</i> there is no shop, the first one can be found in the following villages east or west. On Friday there is a small vegetable & fish market in the <i>Government Station</i> . You can get fruits only if you are nice to the people and then maybe they will give it to you as a present, there is no shopping (all have their own plantations ...). Once a month, usually in the last week, the supply ship comes from Fiji to Rotuma. Then the shops are again restocked.
Post	In the <i>Government Station</i> , this is also a shop.
Spare parts / refueling	Spare parts are not available in Rotuma and there is no petrol station (only in the villages gasoline is sold for the few motorcycles).
Water	It seems that in the port of <i>Oinafa</i> you can get water (we have had no needs since we have a watermaker). If necessary ask in the village of <i>Oinafa</i> . Water is not a problem on the island, since there are underground springs in the lava rock, which are also emptying into the sea as subterranean sources.
Hospital	There is a very modest hospital in the <i>Government Station</i> , but for serious problems it is better to fly to <i>Suva</i> or <i>Funafuti</i> (where they have an excellent equipped hospital).
Fly in / out	Rotuma has a small airport and you can fly in and out with small aircraft to Suva (600FJD). At the moment, the runway is on work to be asphalted, it is (stand 2017) only a grass runway which becomes impracticable with persistent rain. The works should be completed in 2018 and then Fiji Airways will serve Rotuma on there existing route to Funafuti / Tuvalu several times a week. A hotel on the island does not exist currently; tourism is (all but the few yachts a year) completely absent. We think much will change on the island once will be finished the asphalted runway on this so sleepy island!



CRUISING INFORMATION

Anchorage

12 29,257S | 177 07,241E

SV Tuvalu 09.-18.08.2017

The small port of Oinafa at the NE corner of Rotuma offers perfect protection in the prevailing SE / E winds. You will stay absolutely quiet on about 4 meters of sand in the harbor basin. This perfect anchorage is one of the most beautiful places which we have seen in the South Pacific: a fine sandy beach, a somewhat derelict harbor mole, beautiful coral reefs right next to the anchorage and behind the beach a small village with very nice, helpful inhabitants.



Navionics (August 2017) is pretty displaced and with few details, but I have registered in the Navionics community the coral reef and the mole. Of course Ovitalmaps / Google is absolutely correct.

As can be seen, the anchorage is open from N to W. Nevertheless, we have anchored here during the passage of a trough with a wind rotation of 360 degrees. With NW 20 during a few hours it was a bit rolling, but never dangerous (the sandy anchor ground is excellent). It is important to be in the middle between the mole and the coral reef, so you can easily make a 360 turn. With 20m chain on 3-4 meters of water depth this works without problems.

Anchorage A 12 29,257S | 177 07,241E

Anchorage B 12 29,241S | 177 07,243E (located about 15m NW from the A, here we have stayed during the trough)

Concrete Bollard: 12 29,205S | 177 07.189E

South end of the wharf: 12 29,220S | 177 07.274E

Depending on the draft of your yacht, you go as far as possible towards the beach. So you will get better protection from the weak swell which is still could turn around the island. However, we stayed absolutely quite. The coral reef in the south is a continuous wall, the water depth jumps from about 3-4m directly to zero.

The locals told us that it is not necessary to leave the harbor when the supply vessel (mentioned above) arrives. The supply vessel will be placed between the ramp of the breakwater and the concrete bollard and does not pose any danger to a anchored yacht. Even we have not seen it.

Alternative anchorages

There is still a small "bay" in the SE and a large bay at the Government Station in the SW, which (especially the second one) seems to offer good protection in the case of longer northern winds (see picture above). But we did not anchor there.

Sightseeing

On Rotuma there is nothing to do, everyone has time and life is peaceful. We stayed 10 days there and would have liked to stay still much longer ... Rotuma is small, everyone knows everyone, and after 24 hours the whole island seems to know that after long time a new sailing yacht has arrived. Whatever you needs; just ask ... Nevertheless, here are a few hints:

Trip to the Government Station

To the Government Station you can go for free with the school bus (a track), it's leaving the village in the morning around 7 AM and comes back in the evening. He goes up to the high school, from there you needs to catch a second track to the "center".

You may make also hitchhiking, the very few cars stops easily. From the port to the Government Station is about 10km on a beautiful sand road. Driving time about 30 minutes.

Island tour

If you want to drive around the island on the sand road, you can rent one of the tracks (about 100FJD). Maybe you can rent also a motorcycle from one of the locals. Especially the south coast is sensational.

diving

Right next to the anchorage you can snorkel the very beautiful coral reef. There is also fresh water inlets in to the sea, which you recognizes at the then somewhat blurred view.

church

On Sundays at 10 they they have service at the church (Methodists), singing nicely. We think you should go even if you are not religious, if you are anchored on Sundays. The small village community will appreciate it very much.

IMPRINT

We have written this very personal information about what we have experienced and applied ourselves. So with all subjectivity and without any claim of a full cruising guide completely covering the sailing region. Of course we are looking forward to additions and corrections, we will occasionally update this document to our website.

This PDF should be gladly passed on to all your friends - by mail, on the memory sticks, printed, however. This is what we thought about it and that is why we wrote it. However, the distribution and publication remains subject to commercial intentions; the copyright – also in parts - remains unrestricted to us.

We have been sailing around the world slowly since 2011 with our Dufour 40 Performance "TUVALU". 36'000 nautical miles are behind us (as of 2017), and hopefully many more. Our website is in Spanish and German. All about us you can find here: www.tuvalubarcelona.es/index.php/crew/, further details on the yacht as well as our blog on www.tuvalubarcelona.es.



Fair winds
Hans & Imma