

EXPLORE NUKU'ALOFA - 2 HR WALKING TRAIL



In the second block, the former **18 British High Commissioner's** residence, is now called the White House and is used for Tongan government functions, sports a flagpole surrounded by four cannons from the Port au Prince. The ship was captured and burned by the Tongans at Ha'apai in 1806 after they had clubbed to death all its crew except Will Mariner. King George Tupou I had two wives and both are buried in casuarina-ringed graves.

19 Mala'e'aloa Cemetery, whose name means 'tragic field'. This cemetery is for Royal people only.

Next left, turn onto Sipu Road

The first left is Salote Rd if you look to your left there is another view of Zion Hill.

Second left, turn onto Wellington Road

Walk to the intersection of Wellington Road and Vaha'akolo Road. On the right corner stands the **20 Centenary Church**. This grand building is often referred to as the Royal Church. It was founded in 1885 by King George Tupou I and originally named the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga.

Members of the Free Wesleyan Church constructed Centenary Church between 1949 and 1952. While construction was going on, the town was divided into sections that shared the feeding of the workers three meals a day. The construction cost was about TOP \$80,000 (US\$40,000/£20,000); the actual value of the materials and labour was many times that amount. The church seats about 2,000 people.

Diagonally opposite are the Headquarters of **21 His Majesty's Army Forces**. There are a total of about 700 soldiers distributed in 3 different camps. The land force soldiers are based at Taliai Camp near the airport. The marine soldiers are based at the Touliki Navy Base.

Turn into Vaha'akolo Road

Beside the Saione Church is the **22 Mala'e Mamoaloa**, owned by the Free Wesleyan Church. The field is used for church occasions such as the Annual Conference (June) which has numerous feasts, with hundreds of roast pigs and other Tongan local dishes. School bazaars are also held here featuring Tongan handicrafts made by local students.

Continue walking towards the end of the Vaha'akolo Road

On your right is **23 Queen Salote College**, owned by the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, a girls school named after the wife of King George Tupou I. Established in 1926, its motto is 'Ko Tonga Mo'unga Ki He Loto', 'Tonga's Strength-hold is its Heart'. The current roll is approximately 1000 students. They are always neatly dressed with their hair always plaited.

Turn left into Mateialona Road

24 Mala'e Kula (Royal Tombs)

In 1885 His Majesty King George Tupou I declared a day of fundraising (Red Day Festival) for the start of the first Government public school. Red was chosen to represent the blood of Christ. After the Red Day Festival this ground was known as Mala'e Kula (red ground). In 1893 when the King passed away, Mala'e Kula was chosen as the burial ground as it is part of the Royal Estate. It was considered convenient for the catafalque bearers (fata) to march straight from the Royal Palace to Mala'e Kula. King George Tupou I was embalmed and lay in-state at the Royal Palace while the construction work for the Royal Tomb was carried out. King George Tupou I, was the first to be buried here in 1893.

25 Tonga High School is on the other side of Mateialona Road. This is a Government High School. It was established in 1947, their motto is 'Ki He Loto'.

ROUTE ONE

Visitor Centre – Talamahu Market

Duration: 2 hours

Coming out of the **1** Visitor Centre turn left heading West on Vuna Road heading toward the heart of town, there is a playground on the left known as **2 Fa'oneua Park**. This is the only children's playground in Tonga, and you will find that it's usually packed on school holidays. Even though it's owned by the Government, it is supported and maintained by the Nuku'alofa Rotary Club. The equipment is donated by different organisations both locally and internationally.

At the rear is the **3 Fa'oneua Convention Centre**, managed by the Prime Minister's Office. Fa'oneua Convention Centre was officially opened in September 2007 by the Queen Mother, during the 38th Pacific Island Leaders Forum. Since then a lot of important South Pacific meetings and conferences have been held here. It can now be hired out for any function.

Cross Fatafehi Road and keep walking down Vuna Road

This next block is entirely **4 Government Ministries**. The newer three-story building holds 3 Government Ministries. The bottom floor is the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Food & Fisheries, the second floor is the Ministry of Education and the top floor is the Ministry of Lands and Survey.

Straight across the other side of Vuna Road is the **Eastern and Western Bus Station**. There are two main Bus Station hubs in Nuku'alofa - they are both along the waterfront. You can see the other **5 Central Bus Station** just further down Vuna Road. Buses run from anywhere between 7am - 5pm. Buses travel to both Eastern and Western Districts as well as within town areas.

There is no set timetable but buses simply do the same routes throughout the day. There are also no bus stops so people are able to wave down a bus at any open point on the route. Destinations are usually in capital letters in front of the bus.

When you get to the next left, turn into Railway Road, walk down the block

6 Railway Road. In 1914 during World War I, this road was used to carry tools and equipment from and to Vuna Wharf, later on it was also used to transport copra and banana to the wharf. Half of Railway Road is turned into a one way street in town, this is the only one way street in the whole of Tonga, it runs along from Mateialona Road to Salote Road.

The colonial-era wooden structure on the left on the first block serves as the Parliament. The **7 Parliament** was first opened on 16th September, 1875. The creation of Parliament together with the Tongan Constitution was important in order to safeguard Tonga's sovereignty. The original Parliament was composed of the: Government - the premier, the minister for lands and minister for police; nine representative from Tongatapu, five from Ha'apai, four from Vava'u, one from Niuatoputapu and from Niuafo'ou. These were appointed by the King for life; and twenty people's representatives elected along the same regional lines as nobles. The Speaker was appointed by the King. Tours can be organised for visitors ahead, however everyone that enters (including visitors) must be in Formal Tongan attire. Parliament meets from June to September.

The brown block building at the back is the **7 Supreme Court House**, there are 3 Supreme Courts and also 3 Magistrate Courts - one is in Fasi (Nuku'alofa), one is in Nukunuku in the west side and one is in Mu'a in the east side. There are about over 40 lawyers in Tonga.

Cross over to the other side of Railway Road

The large lawn area is called **8 Pangai Si'i**, Pangai is its name and Si'i meaning small. This land is owned by Government and used for Government and Royal

events only. There is a small bandstand in the middle of the lawn, this is where the Military band assemble on Memorial Day (November 4) and ANZAC Day (April 25). On the other side there is a Tongan War Memorial honouring Tongans who served in both World Wars.

Heading back towards Vuna Road

9 Treasury Building. Constructed in 1928, it's a fine example of South Pacific colonial architecture. Early in its life it housed the Tongan Customs Service and the Post Office as well as the Treasury Department.

Cross over to the other side of Vuna Road

10 Vuna Wharf, was built in 1906, and for some 60 years most visitors to Tonga disembarked from ships that tied up here. A railway once ran through town along Railway Road to transport copra and other crops to Vuna Wharf. Recently it was upgraded for visiting cruise liners and super yachts enjoying the wonderful cruising around Tonga.

Continue walking on Taufa'ahau Road away from the market

The big field on your right is **11 Pangai Lahi**. This land is owned by the King so it is royal land. The name Pangai is referred to as a special space for the King. This field is only for Royal and Government events such as royal feasts, kava ceremonies, and parades.

12 The Royal Palace is the official residence of the King of Tonga. Nuku'alofa's white Victorian wooden Palace was commissioned by King George Tupou I. The palace was prefabricated in New Zealand, shipped to Tonga, and erected in 1867. The second-story veranda was added in 1882 and then the Palace substantially extended during the reign of Tupou V. Historically, the Privy Council was held at the Palace.

Although the Palace is not open to the public, it is easily visible from the waterfront and makes a great photograph.

Generally, the present King George Tupou VI and his family do not live at the Palace and instead use it for 'official functions', with parts of the Palace now used to house the Royal Archives and artworks.

Now walk along Taufa'ahau Road

You will pass the **13 Raintree Square**, this tree is believed to be already there during World War II (1941), it is an appropriately shaded by the huge rain tree in front of the modern Westpac Bank of Tonga. The park benches at the base of the tree are a local gathering place.

After the Raintree Square there is the newly renovated **14 Post Office**.

Across the street from the Post Office, stands the colonial-style **15 Prime Minister's Office** with its quaint tower. This is the oldest government building. The glass building next door houses the Public Service Commission.

At the next right turn onto Salote Road

Third building on the left is the **16 Nuku'alofa Club**, is a reflection of the old South Pacific. It's a private men's club where Tonga's elite gather to relax over a game of snooker and a few beers.

Looking straight ahead there's **17 Chapel or Zion Hill**, this is the highest point in the town, it is 15m above sea level. This is part of the Royal Estate and was a Tongan fort during the 18th century.

At the end of Salote Road turn right on Vaha'akolo Road. When you get to the water, look back and take your photos of the palace framed by the Norfolk pines.

Picturesque Vuna Road runs west from the palace, with the sea and reef on one side and stately old colonial homes on the other.

rebuilt it after the fire. The school currently has over 1200 students.

26 Queen Salote Memorial Hall, next door to THS is the country's national auditorium. This theatre style hall can hold over 2000 people and is believed to be one of the biggest halls in the South Pacific. It was funded by Taiwan and the Tongan Government and was commissioned in March 1995. This was the venue for the Miss South Pacific competition held in Tonga in 1995 and the first time for Miss Tonga to win the Miss South Pacific title.

Next left, turn onto Taufa'ahau Road and walk to the end of the block

You will find the Royal Tombs on the left which cover the whole block. At the end of the block on the other side of the road, opposite the Royal Tombs, rises the tent-shaped **27 Basilica of St. Anthony of Padua**, the first basilica in the South Pacific islands. Much of this impressive building was constructed by volunteer labour between 1977 and 1980 with the unique conical roof allowing a wonderful show of light through the stained glass windows. The large wooden beam joints are traditionally covered with coconut sennit mats woven locally. The altar, lecturn, baptism, pews and tables were hand-crafted with the Stations of the Cross made from coconut wood and inlaid with mother-of-pearl. At Station XI, a tiny coconut tree that belonged to Queen Salote Tupou III is fitted into the hair of Christ.

Next, turn left onto Laifone Road

Walk down until you get to the next intersection, on the corner of Tu'i Road is the **28 Centennial Church**, Free Church of Tonga. Built of coral block in 1888, it is a magnificent example of early Tongan church architecture. The church was established in 1885 by King George Tupou I (formerly Taufa'ahau Tupou I) and Rev. Shirley W. Baker. Originally with the name The Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, it became the official state church. Queen Salote and King Tupou IV were both christened in the Free Church of Tonga. The church operates three high schools, one each in Tongatapu, Ha'apai and Vava'u, all named Tailulu College.

Walk back and turn left onto Taufa'ahau Road

Now follow Taufa'ahau Road towards the waterfront. On this main street, you'll pass a few vacant lots as the result of the November 2006 riot. The remaining shops carry handicrafts and clothing. You will also find several modern day cafes (Friends and Coffee Post) who serve the locally grown coffee - a unique taste for the coffee lover.

Just before Salote Road - cross to the other side of Taufa'ahau Road

Next door to Friends Café, you will find **29 Langafonua Handicrafts Centre**. The clapboard house was built by William Cocker, a local merchant, for his five daughters, who lived in New Zealand but spent each winter in Nuku'alofa. HM Late Queen Salote Tupou III set up Langafonua Handicrafts Centre in 1953. It stocks the best range of traditional Tongan handicrafts and fine arts. The centre was set up to preserve the ancient craft skills and promote Tongan handicrafts. All are made locally and reflect the proud culture and heritage of the Kingdom of Tonga.

Next right, turn onto Salote Road

Walk past the **30 Police Station** on the left to **31 Maketi Talamahu** in the second block, the lively produce market where vendors sell a great variety of fresh produce, ranging from huge taro roots and watermelons to string beans and bananas. Tongatapu climate is cool enough during the winter months that both European and tropical fruits and vegetables grow in great bounty. At the back and upstairs, there are many stalls carrying locally produced handicraft items, such as tapa cloth, straw baskets, mats, carving and jewellery.

End your tour here by looking around the market and enjoying some locally grown fruits or sipping on a fresh young coconut!

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