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**South Pacific As A Romantic Getaway?**

**By Norm Goldman**

**South Pacific As A Romantic Getaway? by Norm Goldman, Editor of [Sketchandtravel.com](http://Sketchandtravel.com) & [Bookpleasures.com](http://Bookpleasures.com)**

Today, Norm Goldman, Editor of [Sketchandtravel.com](http://Sketchandtravel.com) and [Bookpleasures.com](http://Bookpleasures.com), is pleased to have as a guest well known author, travel writer and expert on the South Pacific, David Stanley. David is the author of Moon Handbooks South Pacific.

Good day David and thank you for accepting our invitation to be interviewed.

NORM:

Please tell our readers something about yourself, your expertise and the books you have authored pertaining to the South Pacific.

David:

I've earned a living from travel guidebooks since 1979, when Moon Publications of Rutland published the 1st edition of SOUTH PACIFIC HANDBOOK .  
In November 2004, Avalon Travel Publishing of Emeryville, California, brought out the 8th edition of Moon Handbooks South Pacific. I've also written Lonely Planet guides to Eastern Europe, Cuba, and Canada's Maritime Provinces. Lately I've been exploiting the power of the Internet with sites like SOUTH PACIFIC.ORG: MAP SOUTH PACIFIC and CUBA PICTURES.

NORM:

When we talk about the South Pacific what exactly are we referring to and where is it situated in relation to the USA or Canada?

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David:

The "South Pacific" brochures printed by tour operators often focus on Australia and New Zealand, but those countries are quite different from the tropical Pacific islands. Moon Handbooks South Pacific covers 15 insular countries and territories from Easter Island to the Solomons. People tend to consider this region remote, yet it takes only two hours longer to fly from Los Angeles to Tahiti than it does to fly to Honolulu. Fiji is midway between Hawaii and New Zealand, to the west of Tahiti.

NORM:

Would you consider the South Pacific a good choice for a romantic getaway or wedding and honeymoon destination? Why?

David:

All of the main South Pacific destinations have attempted to market themselves as wedding or honeymoon destinations. Fiji and the Cook Islands have been the most successful as weddings can be arranged locally with little fuss. In French Polynesia, marriages can only be performed for persons with 30 days residency, which excludes most tourists. Instead, French Polynesia has developed an active honeymoon industry with Bora Bora highly favored by bridal magazine writers who enjoyed the hospitality of luxury resorts. In my opinion, Moorea is Bora Bora's equal in all but name and is far less expensive. For a romantic getaway, I recommend Rarotonga in the Cook Islands. There is a lot to see and do within a compact area, and prices are fair.

NORM:

What is the best time to visit the South Pacific from the point of view of weather, costs, crowds, and the availability of flights from the USA, Canada and Europe?

David:

Officially, the hurricane season in the South Pacific is from December to April, although with global warming it's starting earlier and ending later. Winter (May to October) is generally cooler, drier, and less humid throughout the region, the best time to go. May to August is the off-season in Australia and New Zealand; hence Air New Zealand's low season South Pacific airfares apply those months. So by a happy coincidence, you can enjoy the best weather for the lowest price if you schedule your trip at that time.

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NORM:

How safe is it to travel to the South Pacific?

David:

Very safe. "Terrorists" would stand out like sore thumbs on these small islands. Violent crime (muggings, etc) is almost unknown, but petty theft does occur. Nothing will go astray if a few simple precautions are taken. Contrary to the image fostered by Hollywood and in the tourism brochures, the island societies are socially conservative and scanty dress is frowned upon. Women traveling alone should avoid staying in isolated bungalows or wandering off on deserted beaches.

NORM:

Could you give our readers an idea of the costs involved if travel originates from the USA or Canada and how accessible is it to fly to the South Pacific?

David:

One-month roundtrip airfares from Los Angeles or Vancouver to Tahiti, Rarotonga, or Fiji start around US\$1,250 in the low season, provided you book at least 14 days in advance and are willing to accept a 35 percent cancellation fee. If you fly on shorter notice during the high season (December to February), you'll pay around US\$2,000. The weekend travel sections of major newspapers carry ads for discounted fares, and websites sometimes sell tickets for considerably less than the prices quoted by airline agents over the phone. For example, I recently flew from Vancouver to American Samoa for US\$700 roundtrip on an Internet special. Such offers are routinely announced in the newsletter of the South Pacific Tourism Organization, available at SOUTH PACIFIC TOURISM ORGANIZATION.

NORM:

If you had to choose 6 unequalled venues in the South Pacific for a romantic getaway, honeymoon or wedding destination, what would they be and why?

David:

My first choice would be:

Tahiti and its neighbours Moorea and Bora Bora.

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The soaring green peaks and brilliant reefs of these islands are unsurpassed, and the "exotic" French atmosphere combines well with the charm of Polynesia.

Fiji is a very close second for its stunning variety and friendliness.

Then there's Rarotonga in the Cook Islands.

This is long a favorite holiday destination for New Zealanders. Rarotonga is small enough to explore in a week, and the facilities are excellent.

My fourth choice is Easter Island. Although for those into hiking or archaeology, it should come first. Travel agents often book three-night stopovers on Easter Island, but only the highlights can be seen during such a short stay.

Finally, I should mention Vanuatu for those looking for something really different. This little known Melanesian country offers a colorful mix of scuba diving, tribal culture, active volcanoes, and the South Pacific's most beautiful capital city, Port Vila.

NORM:

What resources are available on the Internet pertaining to weddings and honeymoon vacations in the South Pacific?

David:

Obtaining independent information on weddings and honeymoons isn't easy as resort and tour company websites only promote their own products. That said, HONEYMOON FIJI and HONEYMOON VANUATU are worth a look, and TRAVEL MAXIA is useful in that it covers the entire South Pacific. It's also well worth perusing the official tourism websites of the island visitors bureaus, all of which are linked to SOUTH PACIFIC.ORG

NORM:

Is there anything else you would like to add that we have not covered pertaining to the South Pacific?

David:

The South Pacific should be recognized as a straightforward, trouble-free destination. None of the countries included in my book require visas of North Americans, Europeans, Australians, New Zealanders, or Japanese. Obstacles like erratic pricing, corrupt officials, violent crime, and security glitches are generally absent here. This sprawling region is best characterised by its amazing variety, with many distinct cultures, cuisines, histories, and environments to experience and enjoy. At US\$24.95, Moon Handbooks South Pacific has the potential

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to save vacationers hundreds of dollars, while assisting them in making the best choices. It's all in there.

Thanks David for accepting our invitation to be interviewed.

Norm Goldman is the editor of [sketchandtravel.com](http://sketchandtravel.com) [bookpleasures.com](http://bookpleasures.com). Norm and his wife Lily are a unique husband and wife team who meld art with words focusing on romantic destinations. Norm and Lily are always open to invitations to romantic destinations and hospitality properties in the USA.

### **Getaway Without Going Over The Budget**

**By Dana Sanders**

The perfect honeymoon or romantic getaway is only one imaginative idea away from reality. In other words all it takes to experience the perfectly affordable, amazingly romantic, and spectacularly exciting getaway is formulating the idea in your mind. It really is that simple.

Reserving tickets for your flights, searching endlessly for the right amount of days at your favorite hide-away, and worrying over what is included with your resort "deal" is all a thing of the past. There are far too many simple solutions offered to the deserving public for anyone to be concerned about such mundane things. With Internet access and hundreds of vacation resort deals to choose from there is no reason to delay a getaway of your own. Think of it as an aid in your overall health and happiness.

Imagine for a moment basking in the sun on a private beach with your new bride or groom. It is just the two of you all alone with white sand, emerald seas, and the endless blue sky. Even though you are all alone you are never lonely. Romance is in the air almost everywhere you wish to vacation, while certain spots are best known for the ambience of love.

You can follow the traditions of typical romantic hot spots or you can create one of your own. Depending on what your idea of romance might be there are countless ways and means by which to share the love you have for your significant other.

Horseback riding along the coast in the Carolinas, windsurfing in Honolulu, or gliding along a canal in a gondola in Venice all have the same air of romance about them depending on your idea of romance. Finding vacation resort deals that take you to any of these destinations and more is found easily by a simple search online.

Make your decision to be swept away and only look back to enjoy the wonderful memories of a fantastic romantic getaway. Never think you can only be romantic certain times of the year, or certain times in your life, romance should be a fun part of life that is not pushed to the edge and enjoyed only on special occasions. Romance should be affordable, frequent, and memorable.

Love, laughter, and happily-ever-after are all part of the resort vacation deals available today. Any excuse to partake in the atmosphere of romance on an island in the Mediterranean is a good excuse. You might find a romantic vacation getaway is just the perfect ticket for an enhanced loving glow that

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lasts for months.

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