



LEVERAGING LOCAL CULTURE FOR TOURISM: SAMOA



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SAMOA AT A GLANCE



Home to over
200,000
PEOPLE



CAPITAL
Apia

The capital city **Apia** is on **Upolu** island situated to the southeast of Savai'i, known as the 'big island'.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES



Tourism



Fishing



Agriculture



GEOGRAPHY

Samoa is a small **archipelago** in the centre of the **South Pacific**. It is made up of **4 inhabited islands** and a number of smaller islands and outcrops. The 4 inhabited islands are **Upolu**, **Savai'i**, **Manono** and **Apolima**.

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ROLE OF THE FA'A SAMOA IN TOURISM

- The Fa'a Samoa or “the Samoan Way of life” is the foundation of Samoan identity and society
- Key principles:
 - Matai system (chiefly leadership)
 - Respect (fa'aaalo) and communal responsibility
 - Extended family (Aiga)
- Culture is not a performance – it is a way of life for us
- Our unique culture provides authentic experiences



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CULTURAL TOURISM ACTIVITIES AND EXPERIENCES

- Village Experiences
 - Immersion in village routines and daily life
 - Church services
- Traditional dance and music (Siva Samoa and fire knife dancing)
- Handicrafts
 - Siapo making, carving and weaving demonstration
 - Tattooing (tatau) demonstration
- Culinary Experiences
 - Umu cooking demonstration
 - Sampling of local dishes like palusami, taro and Oka
- Teuila Festival



BENEFITS OF CULTURAL TOURISM IN SAMOA

- Economic development in rural and local communities
- Cultural Preservation through authentic story telling and educating visitors on local customs, attire and behaviour
- Diversified tourism offerings beyond resorts and beaches
- Community empowerment through inclusive participation
- Driver of sustainable tourism
- Unique selling point and authentic experiences



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CHALLENGES OF LEVERAGING CULTURE FOR TOURISM

- Cultural commodification
- Loss of Cultural Identity
- Exploitation of local communities
- Environmental and Social Impacts
- Capacity and infrastructure limitations
- Intellectual Property and Cultural Rights



CASE STUDY: TEUILA FESTIVAL

- Teuila Festival is the largest cultural festival in Samoa which was established in 1991 and is held annually in September
- Teuila Festival features:
 - Fire knife dancing
 - Traditional dance competitions
 - Traditional tattooing/umu demonstrations
 - Traditional fun games
 - Fautasi race
 - Samoan food fairs with local cuisine
 - Miss Samoa Pageant



CASE STUDY: SIAPO DEMONSTRATION, PALAULI

- A family run operation in Savaii and is very popular for visitors
- Traditional bark cloth art made from the mulberry tree (*u'a*)
- Experience includes: live siapo-making demonstration by artisan, visitor participation (painting simple designs) cultural storytelling & opportunity to buy siapo directly from artist
- Siapo demonstration provides many benefits for this local family and community





FA'AFETAI LAVA

