

# NPCATRAVEL



The Travel Program of the National Parks Conservation Association

NOV. 2-9, 2023

## FA'A SAMOA

THE NATIONAL PARK OF  
AMERICAN SAMOA

### EXPERIENCE

TRADITIONAL CULTURAL  
PRACTICES OF SAMOA

### SEE

THE EXQUISITE BEAUTY OF A  
VIBRANT ECOSYSTEM

### LEARN

HOW NPCA SAFEGUARDS  
CULTURAL RESOURCES

AERIAL OF MANU'A ISLANDS  
*American Samoa*





## PARK HIGHLIGHTS

- **Paddle an outrigger** canoe in the crystal-clear, tropical waters of Pago Pago Harbor with a **local canoe club** and enjoy panoramic views of Rainmaker Mountain and the historic World War II landmarks of Breakers and Blunts Points
- **Journey with expert guides** through coastal areas and paths, secluded beaches, a littoral forest and archaeological sites on the **island of Ta'ū**
- **Spend two full days on Ofu Island:** hiking its mountains, exploring its wildlife and plants, snorkeling among the more than **950 species of fish and 250 types of coral** and relaxing under a thick blanket of stars

## NPCA EXCLUSIVES

- Take part in a **one-of-a-kind trip**, custom designed with NPCA's mission, work and partners at its heart
- Embark with a **local guide** on an **exclusive "insiders tour"** of Aunu'u Island, engaging with **residents of the local villages** and partaking in a traditional "ava" welcome ceremony
- With a **National Park Ranger** by your side, receive expert knowledge as you tour the state-of-the-art Tauese P.F. Sunia Ocean Center to learn about the **National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa**
- Immerse yourself in the oldest culture of Polynesia, the Samoan culture, with a **local family** who will prepare a **traditional style "umu" lunch** for you
- Travel with ease through **one of the most remote national parks in the U.S.**, getting a **behind-the-scenes look** from **NPCA experts** at the challenges facing the area, and how NPCA remains vigilant in helping to preserve *fa'asamoa*: the Samoan way



### FEATURED BIO: THERESA PIERNO

**Theresa Pierno** is President and CEO of the National Parks Conservation Association. She joined NPCA in 2004 after a distinguished career in public service and natural resource protection, and has helped to solidify the organization's role as the voice of America's national parks. Theresa is also the Co-Founder and Co-Chair of America's Great Waters Coalition, a group of 70 member organizations working together to protect and restore waters in and around our national parks that are central to the health of the ecosystem and the recreation of their visitors.

# Fa'a Samoa

## The National Park of American Samoa

**AVAILABLE DATES:** November 2-9, 2023 | **Min/Max:** 8/10

**Length of Tour:** 8 days/7 nights

**NPCA Member Price:** \$5,400 per person double occupancy; \$540 single supplement\*

\*Due to limited availability of accommodations on the islands of Ta'ū and Ofu, clients paying Single Supplement must be willing to share double-occupancy rooms at Vaoto Lodge in the Manu'a Group (Days 5, 6 and 7).

**Estimated Additional Cost of Interisland Transportation:** \$450 per person\*

\*Please note that this interisland transportation fee is an estimated cost. The final amount will be confirmed and billed 30 days prior to departure and must be paid by all guests.

**Deposit:** \$500 per person due at registration

**Arrive/Depart:** Pago Pago (by way of Honolulu, HI)

**Reservations:** Please contact Jared Dial, Associate Director, Educational Travel Program, at **1.800.628.7275** or email the Travel Program at **travel@npca.org**.

**Activity Level:** Travelers should be physically fit and prepared for full-day adventures of walking, standing and sitting. This tour includes hikes and opportunities to swim, snorkel and canoe. Hikes during our journey range from 1-3 miles on rugged terrain and sandy beaches. There is significant elevation descent and gain, with our Mt. Tumutumu hike reaching an elevation of 1,000 feet. Interisland travel is on small planes and boats and vehicle transportation and boat rides may be on rough terrain/surf and take multiple hours. Travelers will spend 6 to 8 hours each day outdoors in hot and humid weather.

**Inclusions:** All outlined accommodations, meals as noted in the itinerary (B-breakfast, L-lunch, D-dinner) and non-alcoholic beverages (alcoholic beverages *will* be included for the welcome dinner and farewell dinner), Interisland transportation and luggage handling between Pago Pago/Ta'ū/Ofu Islands (with payment of "Estimated Additional Cost of Interisland Transportation" quoted above), standard gratuities and entry fees for activities listed in the itinerary. NOTE: Baggage restrictions will apply, especially in the Manu'a portion of the itinerary.

**Exclusions:** Airfare to and from Pago Pago, Tutuila, luggage charges, excess baggage charges between islands, meals not included in the Itinerary, alcoholic beverages (alcoholic beverages *will* be included for the welcome dinner and farewell dinner), travel insurance, items of a purely personal nature and any items not listed in Inclusions.

### Talofa! Welcome to American Samoa and to the only U.S. National Park south of the equator.

On this tour, you have the rare opportunity to visit all three of the islands where the National Park of American Samoa is located. It is one of the most remote national parks and the only U.S. National Park in which the federal government leases the land. The land is still owned by the villages, whose chiefs agreed in 1993 to sign a 50-year lease that enables the National Park Service (NPS) to manage an area of rainforest, beach and coral reef on the three islands.

The NPS works very closely with the local villages on conservation, and all the park's resources are interwoven within the Samoan culture. The traditions and social customs and hierarchies started over 3,000 years ago, long before the arrival of the first Europeans, are still followed by the locals today. The Samoan

way, or fa'asamoa is still deeply ingrained in American Samoa culture and holds the natural environment and land as being most precious.

You will be spending time with the community and learning about the customs of the islands, while also visiting paleotropical rainforests and seeing flora and fauna that are found in no other U.S. National Park. Along with the ecologically diverse National Park of American Samoa, you'll also learn about lesser-known Rose Atoll Marine National Monument. Find out why its protected species are thriving and the role NPCA plays in shielding this area and other marine protected areas from the threat of harmful proposed changes. During this unforgettable NPCA small group tour, you'll feel the warm welcome of Samoan culture as a guest in an immersive experience of community, culture and conservation.





## ITINERARY

### DAY NOV 2: Arrival Day Pago Pago, Tutuila

**1** Arrive in the late evening in Pago Pago on the main island of Tutuila. Your NPCA host and trip leader will meet you once you clear immigration and customs. When the group has gathered, transfer in private shuttles to your beachfront hotel, *Sadie's by the Sea*, and check-in. Your NPCA host will provide an overview of their role and priorities in the region and the exciting sites you can expect to see throughout your carefully crafted NPCA small group adventure. [\*Sadie's by the Sea \(D\)\*](#)

### DAY NOV 3: Pago Pago, Tutuila

**2** Start your first full day in American Samoa with a group breakfast, introductions, and an orientation to the islands and to *fa'asamoa*. The group will then head out together for the **National Park of American Samoa (NPAS) Visitor Center**, where we will get an overview of the park, which spans land and offshore areas on and around the islands of Tutuila, Ofu and Ta'u. A National Park Ranger will join the group as we head out to the **Pago Pago** section of the national park, which is located on the north side of Tutuila Island between Fagasā Bay and Afono Bay and extends from Mt. Alava and the Maunaloa Ridge to the offshore reefs. A picnic lunch will be provided to enjoy during our outing. On the way to the park, we will pass the villages whose chiefs signed the 50-year leases. You may also catch the first glimpse of the large fruit bats, some of which have the wingspan of an owl. Following the visit to the national park, the group will enjoy a tour of the state-of-the-art **Tauese P.F. Sunia Ocean Center** to learn about the **National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa**, the largest and most remote of the U.S. National Marine Sanctuaries. Formed by

extinct volcanoes, its habitats are host to a bewildering variety of tropical fish, invertebrates and algae. This extraordinary marine national monument has faced unprecedented threats to its vital protections — threats NPCA matched with immediate action ensuring the sanctuary's natural and cultural resources remained under protection. As you will experience first-hand, its unparalleled beauty is a legacy NPCA remains vigilant in preserving. The group will walk back to the hotel from the Ocean Center to prepare for a group dinner at a local restaurant. [\*Sadie's by the Sea \(B, L, D\)\*](#)



### DAY NOV 4: Aunu'u Island

**3** After enjoying breakfast, depart for your day excursion to **Aunu'u National Natural Landmark**. Aunu'u is a small volcanic island 1.2 miles southeast of Tutuila with a land area of 0.58 square miles and is home to Aunu'u Village. We will head out to Aunu'u in **water taxis** (small boats) with your local guide from Aunu'u who will take you on a special "insider's tour" to meet the residents of the village. Residents will share typical aspects of daily village life and Samoan practices and customs, including a traditional "ava" welcome ceremony. They will also share beautiful sites where you can spend some time swimming or snorkeling if you choose. Although the beauty of these sites is unmistakable, residents of the village may share their experiences with challenges from rising sea levels in the area — challenges NPCA is spearheading through innovative plans to help uplift communities most affected from these undue burdens. After **swimming or snorkeling**, a local style *umu* lunch will be served, prepared especially for the group by a local family. The "umu" is a traditional Samoan above-ground earthen oven in which food is cooked on heated stones. Samoans usually prepare food in the "umu" on special occasions and for special guests. After lunch we will depart on our return water taxi ride back to **Tutuila**. At the hotel, you can enjoy a bit of free time before gathering for dinner at the hotel restaurant. [\*Sadie's by the Sea \(B, L, D\)\*](#)

### DAY NOV 5: Pago Pago, Tutuila

**4** Sunday is a day of worship in Samoa. Your morning schedule is free, and you may choose to attend one of the many church services in town. Christian missionaries were very successful throughout Polynesia, and church is a very important part of today's Samoan culture. Attending church is an interesting cultural experience and an excellent opportunity to also hear wonderful Samoan singing. Services are available in Samoan and English and last approximately an hour. Enjoy lunch in the hotel restaurant, then join your trip leader to head out for a canoe excursion. **Paddle an outrigger canoe in Pago Pago Harbor** near the hotel with a local canoe club and enjoy panoramic views of Rainmaker Mountain and the historic World War II landmarks of Breakers and Blunts Points under your own power. The group will have dinner together at the hotel, and your trip leader will go over instructions for the three-day visit to the Manu'a districts of the national park. The islands of Ta'u and Ofu are extremely remote with limited modern services. Due to the weight restrictions on the small aircraft for the flight, you will need to pack everything you will need in carry-on sized luggage. The remainder of your luggage will be kept at the hotel in Pago Pago. [\*Sadie's by the Sea \(B, L, D\)\*](#)

### DAY NOV 6: Ta'u – Ofu, Manu'a Islands

**5** We will be departing the hotel early this morning to catch the flight to our first stop - **Ta'u, the largest of the Manu'a Islands**. We will provide a boxed breakfast for you. Historically the island of Ta'u enjoys high status, not only because its size and beauty, but also because of its connection to *Tu'i Manu'a*, the oldest chiefly title in the Samoan Islands and in all of Polynesia. The **national park** covers the southeastern half of the island, which makes Ta'u's portion the largest area (approximately 5,400 acres, of which 1,000 acres is offshore) of the national park. We will be exploring coastal areas and paths which are often overgrown. An "explorer's spirit" will be rewarded with access to secluded beaches, a littoral forest and archaeological sites. While you delight in the deeply significant histories and culture on the remarkable journey through Ta'u, we'll delve deeper into NPCA's efforts to ensure national parks thrive for the next 100 years, a goal that prioritizes the protection of cultural sites and artifacts. Local residents will prepare a delicious lunch for us before we depart on a **2-hour boat ride to Ofu**. Upon our arrival on Ofu, the group will transfer to the Vaoto Lodge, located in the national park and check-in. There will be some time to explore the area and the sandy beach in front of the lodge before joining the group for dinner. [\*Vaoto Lodge \(B, L, D\)\*](#)



**DAYS NOV 7-8: Ofu, Manu'a Islands**

**6-7** We will be spending two days on **Ofu Island**. We'll hike its mountains, explore its wildlife and plants, swim and snorkel in a pristine sea, get to know the beautiful coral reefs and enjoy American Samoa's loveliest beach all within the national park. As there are less than 200 residents on this island, it is truly a "private paradise." As you enjoy the treasures of the park, you'll get a behind the scenes look at how NPCA and thousands of park advocates helped secure permanent funding for our world-class national parks through the Great American Outdoors Act. In the evening, Ofu is a perfect spot for stargazing and viewing the Southern Cross and falling stars in the night sky of the Southern Hemisphere. All meals will be prepared by the owner and served at the lodge. ***Vaoto Lodge (B, L, D)***

**DAY NOV 9: Departure Day: Return to Pago Pago, Tutuila**

**8** Today, we will enjoy our last breakfast at Vaoto Lodge and check out. We will walk over to the Ofu airport, just a few steps away from the lodge and check-in for our flight back to **Pago Pago**. We will arrive in Pago Pago in time to drop off our luggage at Sadie's by the Sea before continuing on to a local restaurant for lunch. After

lunch, we will take a historic walking tour of **Fagatogo** with a local guide. The village of Fagatogo has been the center of American Samoa since serving as the administrative headquarters of the U.S. Naval base Pago Pago from 1900 to 1951. It was for many decades the most westernized village in the Territory, and the only village with a paved road. Today, only 14 Naval buildings remain, and in 1988 many of them were entered onto the National Register of Historic Places to become part of the **U.S. Naval Station Tutuila Historic District** (in Pago Pago Harbor). During the tour, we'll learn why expanding protections for historic sites is a high priority for NPCA. The remainder of the day is free to explore the town on your own, enjoy the beach in front of the hotel or squeeze in a late hike. Check-out of your room in the evening before joining the group for a farewell dinner at the hotel. After dinner, we will transfer to **Pago Pago Airport** by private shuttle to catch the flight to Honolulu, Hawai'i. ***Day use rooms at Sadie's by the Sea (B, L, D)***

***Please note:*** This itinerary is subject to change based on weather conditions and park closures related to COVID-19.



**Travel Insurance:** To protect yourself from the loss of deposit and cancellation fees, you are encouraged to purchase travel insurance. If you need assistance, NPCA recommends contacting Travel Insurance Services through USI Affinity at 1-800-937-1387 or at <http://my.travelinsure.com/npc>; email confirmation packets will include additional details.

**Traveler Responsibility:** Travelers are responsible for choosing an NPCA trip consistent with their ability, fitness and overall health. All travelers are required to complete and return their NPCA waiver of liability, personal information form, flight form, and accept Pacific Islands Institute's Terms and Conditions before being allowed to participate in a trip. Travelers also are responsible for reading and understanding all pre-departure materials and bringing appropriate clothing and gear.

**Trip Cancellation Policy:** Cancellation notice must be submitted in writing and is effective upon date of receipt.

121+ days prior to departure	July 5, 2023	120-91 days prior	90-0 days prior
Deposit is 100% refundable minus a \$250 processing fee	Final payment is due	25% of trip cost is refunded	No refund

### COVID-19 SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Each of our travel partners have developed robust safety protocols to protect the health of our guests, staff and the communities we visit. **In order to participate in this trip, you must be up to date on all COVID-19 vaccinations, as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.** Please contact us for details.





# Why Travel with NPCA?

Our goal is to offer premium itineraries in educational travel in the places we know best: America's national parks.

For over 100 years, NPCA has worked to protect places of unparalleled natural wonder, historical significance and cultural value. Now we want you to experience them firsthand with our knowledgeable staff and partners. Each of our mission-driven trips is custom-designed exclusively by NPCA for you, our closest supporters. Gain valuable insights into our advocacy and conservation efforts by taking a personal look at NPCA's important contributions to park protection. You'll come away with a deeper understanding of, and connection to, this crucial work, made possible only by your support.

## **GAIN ACCESS TO OUR EXPERTS**

Spend quality time with your knowledgeable NPCA trip experts as you experience the national parks alongside those who have fought to protect them. Our trips provide special behind-the-scenes access to National Park Service staff, NPCA partners and other fascinating specialists who bring these places and their stories to life, providing insights into the cultural, natural, and historical significance of the areas and topics explored.

## **SUPPORT NPCA'S MISSION**

By traveling on any of our trips as an NPCA member, a percentage of your trip goes back to support NPCA's work to protect and enhance America's National Park System for present and future generations.

## **ENJOY SMALL GROUPS**

Group size on each of our land trips is guaranteed to be no more than 18 people to maximize your interactions with the experts, boost educational opportunities and allow the group to access lesser-visited places that larger groups cannot. You'll be joined by other park enthusiasts from around the country to share in the experience.

## **TRAVEL WITH EASE**

With NPCA, you can explore the parks without the hassle of planning on your own. Everything is included in your tour, such as meals, accommodations, expert speakers, transportation at the destination, and all activities (unless otherwise stated). We have also worked with each of our travel partners to develop safety measures for our trips in response to the global pandemic.

## **TRAVEL RESPONSIBLY**

Each NPCA travel operator partner is selected based on criteria that includes a commitment to environmentally and socially responsible travel so that we can ensure our parks are preserved in perpetuity.

National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa

NPCA is the only independent, nonpartisan organization dedicated to advocacy on behalf of the National Park System. Over 70% of our funding comes from donations from individuals like you. NPCA trips are an exclusive NPCA member benefit. One traveler per group must be an NPCA member to participate in an NPCA trip. An annual membership starts at \$15 per person. Please make dues payable to NPCA by check or credit card at [npca.org](https://npca.org).