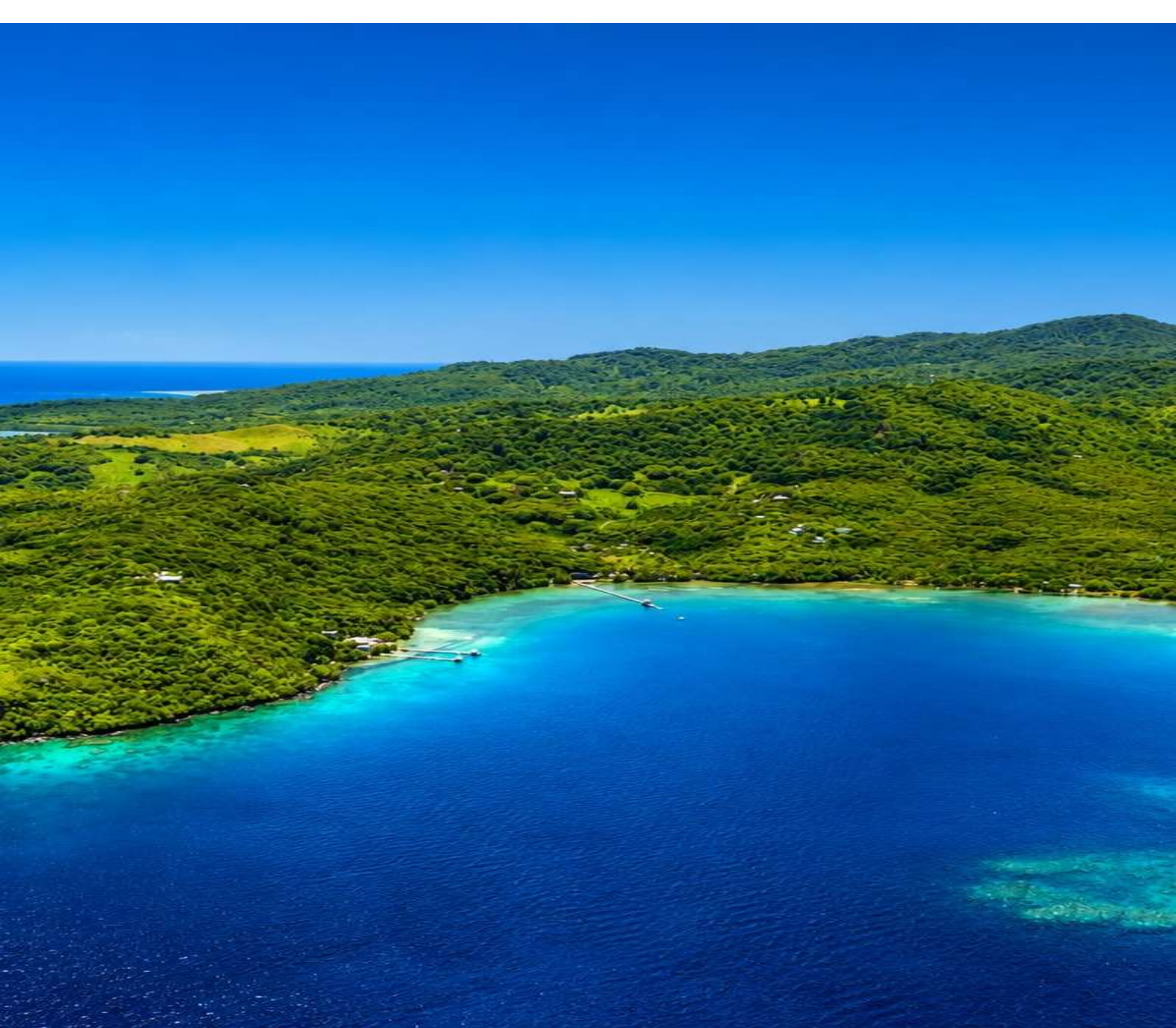




2026 EDITION

KORO ISLAND

The Owner's Companion

by Joe Soecker

First published July 2014

A NOTE BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Welcome to the Island

This book is offered as a gift to the small community of people who love Koro Island — those who already call it home, and those who are still deciding to. Every effort has been made to verify the practical details in these pages as of 2026, but island life moves at its own pace, and businesses, boat schedules, and phone numbers change faster than paperbacks do. Where details have shifted since this printing, we've said so plainly. Please treat names of specific people, prices, and phone numbers as a starting point for your own enquiries, not gospel — and if you find something out of date, tell us at welcome@koroisland.com so the next edition can be a little truer than the last.

The views expressed here are the author's own and do not represent the official position of The Taveuni Development Company, Koro Seaview Estates, Dere Bay Resort, Koro Beach Resort, or their staff and affiliates. Nothing in this book is legal, tax, medical, or investment advice — for all of those, talk to a licensed professional who knows Fiji.

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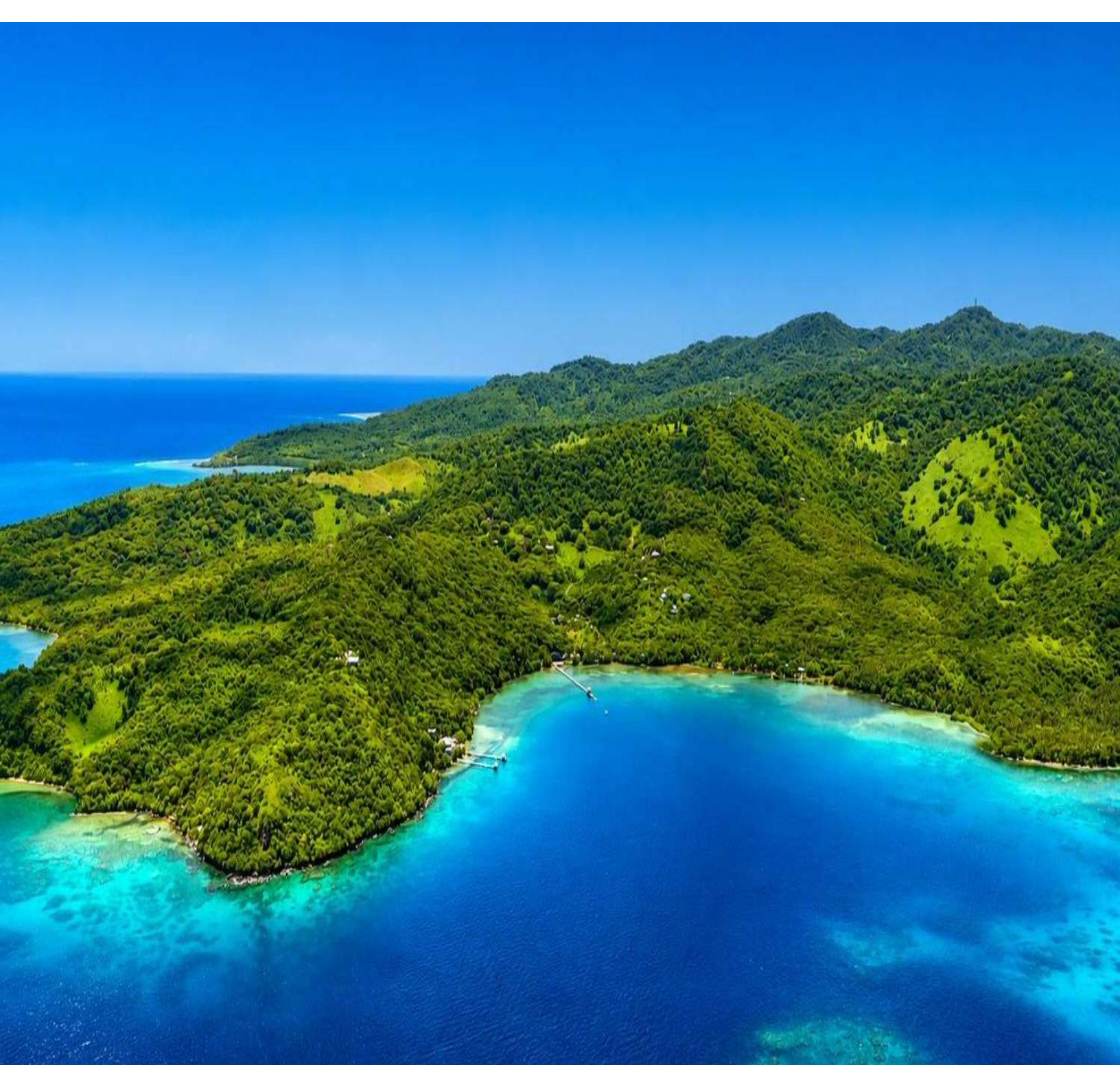
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PART ONE

The Island

What the island is, where it sits, and why it has stayed so quietly itself.

A Small Green Country of Its Own



A home tucked into the rainforest along Koro's northwest coast

Koro rises out of the Koro Sea — a 105-square-kilometre wedge of volcanic rock and rainforest sitting almost exactly between Fiji's two main islands, closer to nowhere than it is to anywhere. There is no direct flight from your country to Koro. There is no five-star resort chain sign at the airstrip. To get here at all, you have to want to. That single fact has quietly kept Koro the way it is.

Geographically, Koro is the seventh-largest island in Fiji, a long spine of extinct cinder cones running north to south, dressed in a green so dense it looks wet even in the dry season. It sits in the Lomaiviti group— the 'central' islands — roughly 100 nautical miles from Suva, 30 from Savusavu, and considerably further from anywhere with a shopping mall. Fourteen villages are scattered across its coast: eight facing east in the Muduwa district, six facing west in Cawa. Between the villages, tucked into the island's northwest corner around a well-protected anchorage called Dere Bay sit two small resorts, and a planned development called Eastwood Estates alongside the existing Koro Seaview Estates — the freehold subdivisions this book is really about, and the reason you're likely holding it.

FAST FACTS

Land area: ~105 km² · Population (2017 census): 2,830 across 14 villages

Location: 17.18°S, 179.24°E — Lomaiviti Group, Koro Sea

Nearest towns: Suva (~100nm by sea, ~35 min by air) · Savusavu (~30nm by sea)

Koro Seaview Estates: ~450 acres of freehold land at Dere Bay, established 1989

History and People



A fisherman works the calm water off Koro in a tin fishing boat

Long before freehold titles and building setbacks, Koro's villages sat back from the coast, out of sight of the raiding canoes that once moved through these waters. Captain William Bligh sailed the passage between Koro and its neighbors after the mutiny on the *Bounty*, close enough to the island to name it on his charts without ever landing. Fijians and a few Indo-Fijians have farmed this soil for generations — Koro Island is often called the most fertile island in Fiji, and its plantations of kava, dalo, and coconut are the quiet backbone of the local economy, alongside a modest but real trickle of tourism and copra.

The freehold parcel that became Koro Seaview Estates was purchased in 1998 by The Taveuni Development Company (TDC), and the roads and Dere Bay Resort followed shortly after. The first buyers arrived from Australia and New Zealand, then the United States, and eventually a long list of other countries. Koro Beach Resort, on the adjoining Tulani land, was added a few years later to house the growing trickle of prospective owners who wanted to see the island before committing it. In February 2016, Tropical Cyclone Winston — the strongest cyclone ever recorded to make landfall in the Southern Hemisphere — hit Koro almost dead-on. Homes across the island had to be rebuilt; Dere Bay Resort, remarkably, came through largely intact. A decade on, the rebuilding is long finished, the forest has grown back over the scars, and a third resort — Koula Beach Resort, a luxury property along with a residential subdivision— is slated to open on the island in late 2027, a sign of how far the destination has come since this book's first edition in 2009.

Climate, Weather, and the Rhythm of the Year

Koro sits comfortably within the tropics, which means exactly what you'd expect: warm year-round, wetter and more cyclone-prone from November to April, drier and gentler from May to October. The Southeast Trades keep Dere Bay pleasantly breezy for much of the year, which is one reason the anchorage was chosen in the first place. Build, plan travel, and provision with the wet season in mind — cyclone season is not a footnote here, it's a planning input, and most seasoned owners keep a real emergency kit, a battery radio, and a healthy respect for weather warnings from the Fiji Meteorological Service.

WHAT THINGS COST

Fiji remains, by Western standards, an inexpensive place to live simply and an easy place to overspend on imported comforts. As a rough 2026 planning guide for a modest, non-extravagant lifestyle in Fiji generally (Suva/urban prices — island life on Koro trades cash costs for self-sufficiency):

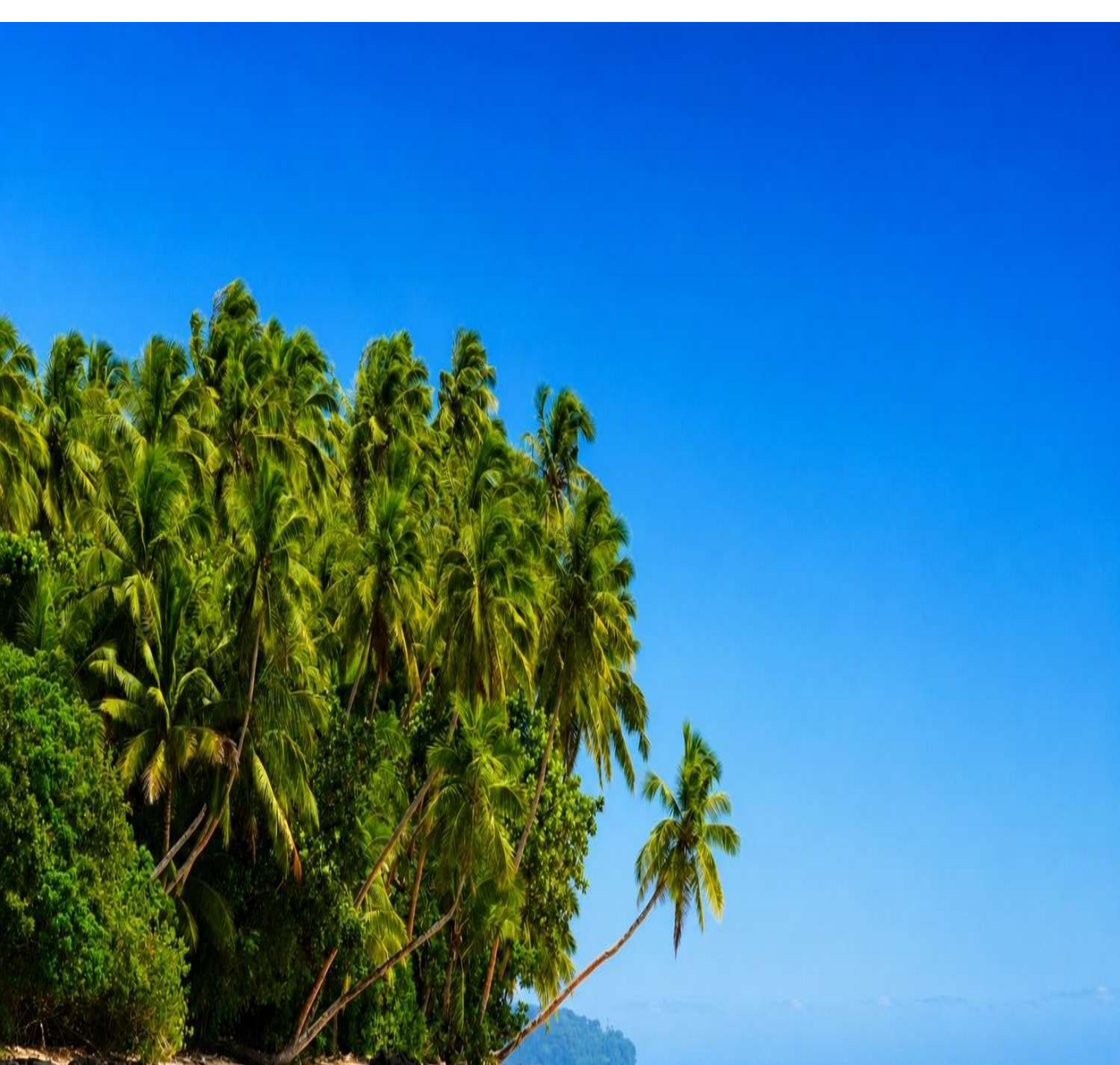
ROUGH MONTHLY GUIDE (2026, FJD UNLESS NOTED)

Comfortable single-person budget in urban Fiji: roughly USD \$1,500–2,500/month all-in

Local produce, fish, and staples: inexpensive; imported goods, wine, and electronics: expensive

On Koro itself, cash costs are lower but self-sufficiency (growing food, managing solar/water, DIY maintenance) does more of the work than money.

Treat every number above as a planning range, not a quote — always check current pricing locally before you budget against it.

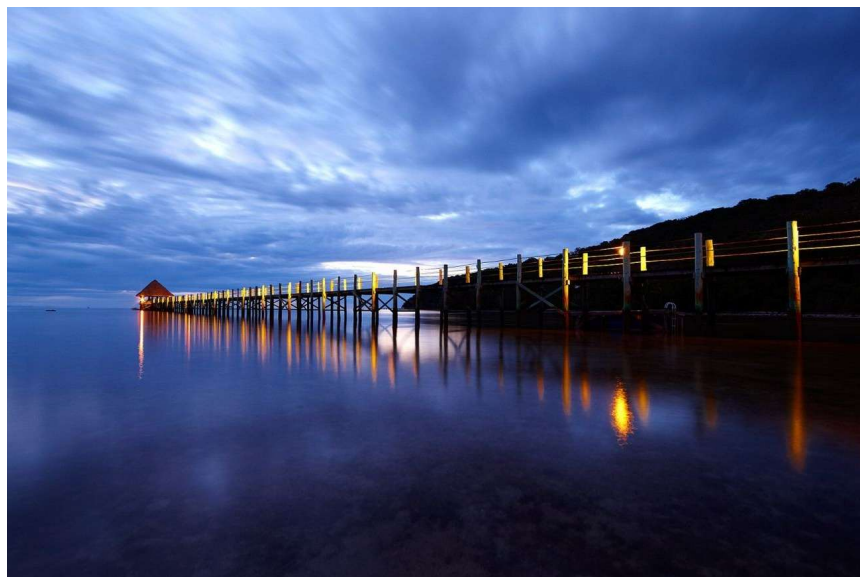


PART TWO

Getting Here

No direct flight, no shortcut — getting to Koro takes a little intention.

Getting to Fiji



Dusk at the pier — the last quiet stretch of the journey in

Fiji Airways remains the nation's flag carrier and the easiest way in, with routes converging on Nadi from Los Angeles, Auckland, Sydney, Brisbane, and a growing list of Asian hubs. Fares fluctuate with the season, so a flexible travel window can save real money. Frequent flyer programs (Fiji Airways' own Tabua Club, plus oneworld partners) are worth joining if you expect to make this trip more than once — the miles, lounge access, and upgrade priority add up quickly for owners who fly back and forth.

Nadi to Suva

Most travel to Koro routes through Suva, on the opposite side of Viti Levu from the international airport at Nadi. The comfortable, reliable option is one of the air-conditioned express coaches (Sunbeam Transport and Pacific Transport both run multiple daily departures, about four hours, roughly F\$25–35). Minibuses are available at around the same price but can be crowded, especially on weekends.

Private transfer operators and taxis cover the same route faster and at a considerably higher price — arrange these in advance, especially if you're catching a connecting flight or ferry. A taxi will cost you roughly F\$300 for the trip.

If you'd like to go fast and easy, but more costly, the flights between Nadi and Suva run roughly \$100 US and go multiple times a day — keeping in mind that flying into Suva has you land at Nausori, a small airport roughly 45 minutes away from the city center, so you're in for another taxi ride from the airport to where you're staying in town.

Getting to Koro Island



The northwest coast and its sheltered anchorage, seen from the air

This is the detail that has actually changed the most since 2014, and it's worth reading closely before you book anything.

BY AIR

Fiji Link — Fiji Airways' domestic arm, the successor to the old Pacific Sun/Northern Air routes referenced in earlier editions of this book — currently operates a scheduled flight between Nausori Airport (Suva) and Koro Island Airport roughly once a week, flown on a small De Havilland Twin Otter with tight baggage allowances (weigh yourself and your bags before you leave the house). Because it's a single weekly service, always confirm the current day and time directly with Fiji Airways before finalising other travel — the schedule has moved around over the years and will likely move again.

BY SEA — FERRY

The ferry picture has changed substantially since 2014. Patterson Brothers Shipping, once a mainstay of this route, entered liquidation in 2023 and its Koro service is no more. Goundar Shipping has a somewhat reliable ferry connection from Suva harbor and its schedule can be found (at times and usually only 24 hrs prior to departure) on Goundar Shippings facebook page. Venu Shipping offers a Suva–Koro connection via bus-and-ferry combinations through Natovi Landing, leaving mostly at night and getting into Koro in early morning. The most current word is usually posted to Koro-focused Facebook community groups rather than a formal timetable. Treat any ferry plan to Koro as flexible and weather-dependent, and always have a backup day built into your itinerary.

BY RESORT BOAT

Chartering a boat between Koro and Savusavu (or, less commonly, the main island) remains one of the most reliable ways to reach Dere Bay, and is typically arranged directly through the resort. If you're travelling solo, ask whether you can join an already-scheduled run — it's often far cheaper than a private charter, and the current going rates and schedule are best confirmed directly with the resort rather than quoted here, since fuel costs and demand shift them regularly.

BY YACHT

Koro remains a serious, rewarding stop for cruisers, but the paperwork hasn't gotten any lighter. All yachts must give Fiji Revenue & Customs Services (FRCS) advance notice of arrival and clear in at an official port of entry — Suva, Lautoka, Levuka, Savusavu, or Rotuma — before continuing to outer islands like Koro. Dere Bay is well sheltered from the prevailing southeast trades; enter with care around Black Rock and the fringing reef on the bay's southwest side, and favor the northern shore. The bay is deep with a broken coral bottom, so pick up one of the resort's mooring buoys rather than anchoring directly — hail Koro Beach Resort on VHF Channel 16 for guidance on which mooring to use.

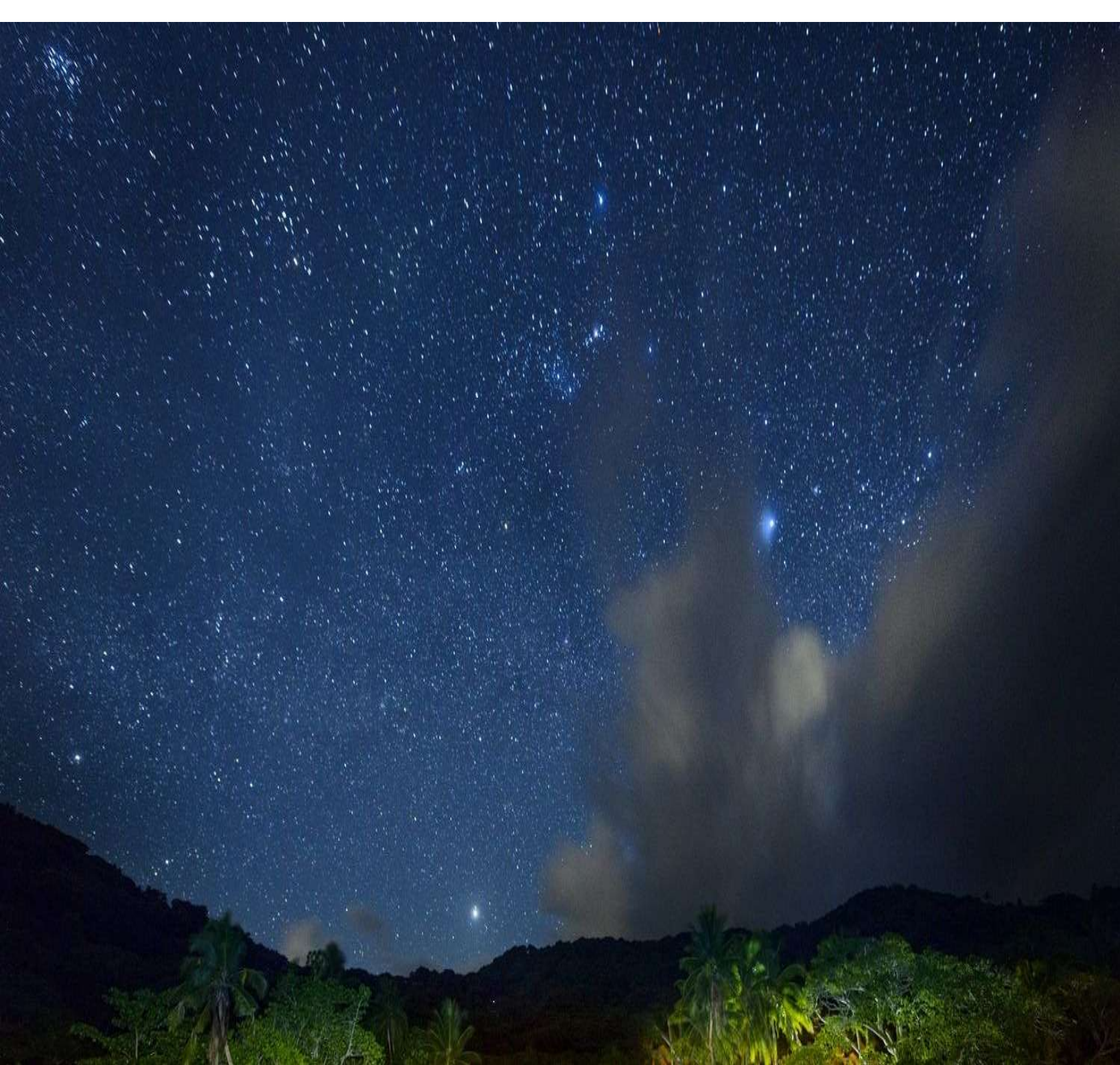
BEFORE YOU BOOK

Confirm the current Fiji Link Koro schedule directly with Fiji Airways — it is a single weekly flight and the day has changed before

Check Goundar and Venu shipping Facebook group for updates

Check the Koro Island community Facebook group and the resorts directly for the current best route

Build at least one buffer day into any trip that depends on a ferry or the weekly flight



PART THREE

Fijian Ways

Custom, hierarchy, and the quiet grammar of respect that runs the island.

Custom, Hierarchy, and Respect



Villagers walking the road between settlements on Koro

"Koro" simply means village in Fijian — a fitting name for an island where custom still organizes daily life more than any council or ordinance does.

Village life in Fiji is organized hierarchically, but not arbitrarily. Age, chiefly lineage, and gender all shape one's position, and that position carries obligation in both directions: a chief is expected to give at least as much as he receives, and elders are expected to lead by supporting, organizing, and looking after those below them, not merely commanding them. This structure is neither cruel nor one-sided once you sit with it a while; it is built on reciprocity, and the higher one's rank, the more one is expected to earn the respect that rank confers, continually, rather than simply inherit it and coast.

Respect shows up in small physical grammar — where one sits, how one moves through a room, the apology (tulou) offered when reaching up or over someone's head, since the head is considered the most sacred part of the body. Sitting cross-legged on the floor is modest and respectful; pointing your feet at someone is not. None of this is difficult once you know it, and it is genuinely no easy task for a foreign body unused to the floor — excuse yourself when your legs give out, nobody will think less of you for it. Almost all friction between newcomers and their hosts comes from simple unfamiliarity rather than malice, and it is very often made worse by a visitor's unconscious swaggering rather than any real offence intended — and just as often quietly absorbed by a Fijian host too gracious to embarrass a guest by naming the mistake.

The traditional wrap worn at the waist, the sulu, remains everyday dress in villages of both genders. At a shared meal, seating still follows the same order it always has — elders and men toward the head of the mat, given the best of what's offered, then younger men, then children, and at the end the women who serve the food. As important as showing proper respect upward is graciously refusing special treatment offered to you as a guest — accepting it without a word of protest can itself read as a small failure of humility. The gender division of labor here — men gardening, clearing land, building, spearing fish; women cooking, weaving, tending children, fishing with nets — is felt by both sides as a source of camaraderie rather than constraint, laced with easy jokes and no shortage of teasing. It may look to a Western eye freshly off the plane, like an imbalance. Sit with it longer and you'll notice women hold real say at home and increasing influence in public life and higher education across Fiji. Respect, in the end, knows no gender here — it just doesn't look the way you expected respect to look.

Vanua: Land, People, and Belonging

The Fijian concept of Vanua reaches well past 'land' as English speakers use the word, and it's worth sitting with, because it explains more about how Koro works than any zoning map will. Vanua literally means land, but it also carries the whole social and cultural fabric of the physical environment identified with a group of people. For a Vanua to be truly recognized, it must have people living on it, upholding its rights and caring for its interests — a land without a people is likened to a person without a soul. The people are the soul of the physical place; the land is what they depend on for survival, nourishment, shelter, protection. Land, seen this way, is an extension of the self, and the people are an extension of the land. Strip away the people and the land goes lifeless; strip away the land and the people are helpless, without ground to thrive on.

Structurally, Vanua is the largest social unit of relatives — a Yavusa traces its heritage through the male line to a common ancestor or ancestor-god (vu), and divides further into clans: chiefs (turaga), the chief's spokesmen (mata-ni-vanua), priests (bete), and fishermen (gone dau). Living vakavanua — the way of the land — or vakaturaga — the chiefly way — isn't only a traditional lifestyle; it names the personal qualities needed to sustain it. Much of this can look, from a Western vantage of progress and entrepreneurship, like complacency. It isn't. Nothing about it precludes hard work; what it does is put balance and harmony ahead of raw progress, and humility and respect at the center of being rather than at the edges of it. Loloma — a feeling of kindness and love — is what arises from living this way, and solidarity is its practical expression: caring for others as the means, not merely the aspiration. As tradition fades faster in the towns than the villages, there is real friction between generations here too, elders quietly mourning a slipping respect among the young — a tension that will sound entirely familiar to anyone who has ever been a parent, anywhere in the world.

Getting Along, and Learning to Listen First

No matter where you're from, you will be a foreigner in Fiji at first. You'll still be met with smiles and 'Bula!' from the first day, but it takes real time to catch the subtler currents of culture and communication in a country you've chosen as your new home. Mark Twain had a line worth keeping taped to the inside of your own skull here: 'A better idea than my own is just to listen.' What looks strange to you on arrival very often makes complete sense a year in, because it fits neatly within the logic of the people who actually live here — logic you simply hadn't been shown yet. It's tempting, coming from a wholly different background, to assume you can, or should, 'improve' things. Resist that instinct longer than feels natural. Watch. Listen. Learn how the people around you already see the world, before you decide it needs your correcting.

Fijians tend to speak softly, and often you'll need to make a real effort to catch what's being said. Politeness and a degree of shyness with people they don't yet know well are the norm, not evasiveness. An open hand and a genuine smile carry more weight here than almost anywhere you've likely lived. Raising your voice — even out of ordinary frustration — reads as a serious breach and can quietly cost you standing that takes a long time to earn back. Be patient and be kind, in the same measure you'd hope for in return.

Establishing Relationships That Last a Lifetime

The friendships you build on Koro, if you let them form slowly and honestly, tend to outlast almost anything else you'll take from this island — longer than the house, quite possibly longer than the reasons you first came. A Fijian's view of you will not be shaped by your job title, your former life, or how much you paid for your lot. It will be shaped by whether you show up, whether your word holds, and whether you treat people the same on your best day as your worst one.

Gifts and support matter here, but not as transaction — give because you have something worth giving, not to purchase standing, which cannot actually be bought. Volunteering time in the village, turning up to help when help

is asked for, showing up to church on a Sunday even if you hold no particular faith yourself, simply because that is where the community actually gathers — these small, unglamorous acts of presence do more to root you here than any amount of money ever will.

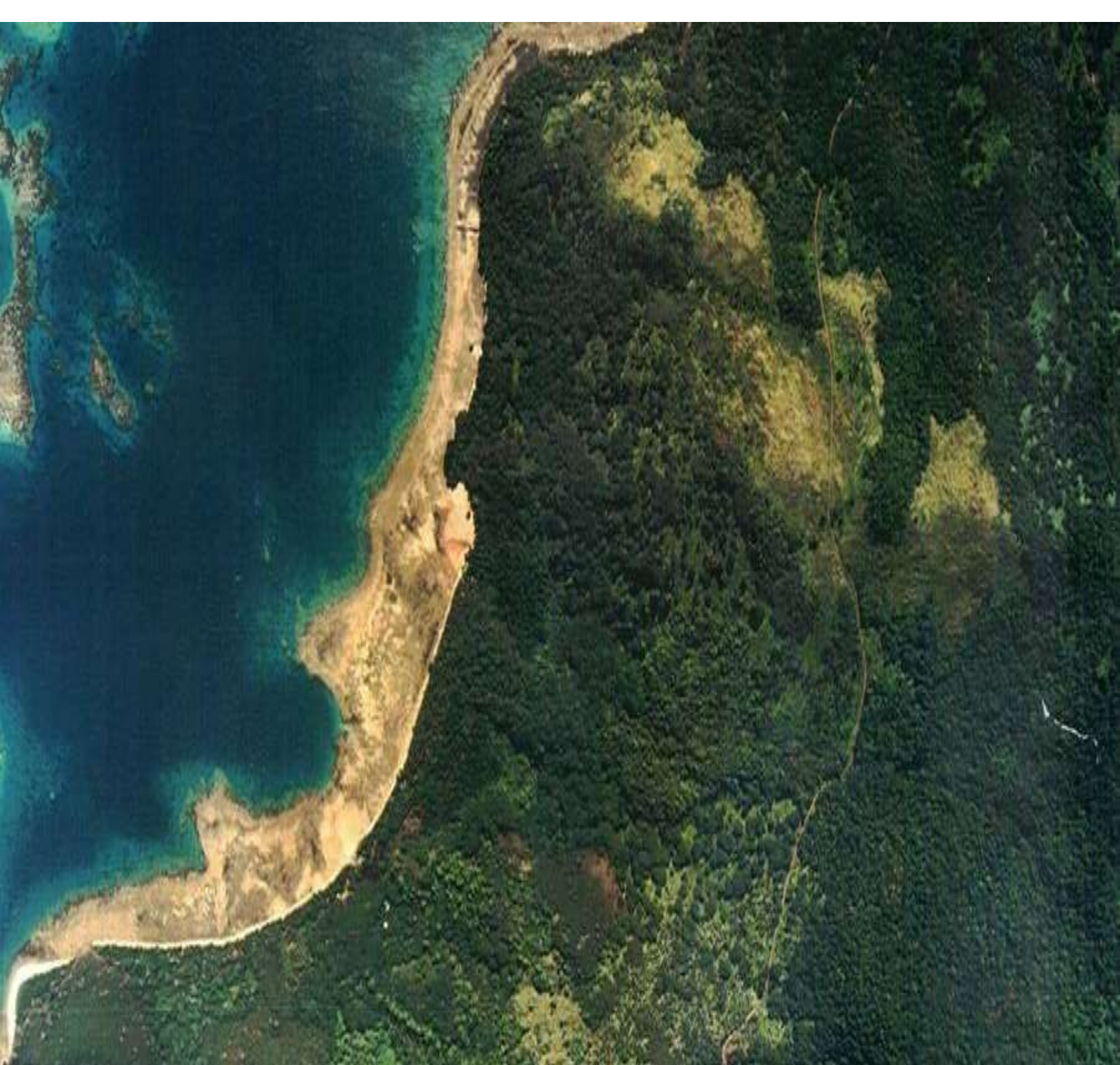
Kava and the Sevusevu



Evenings on Koro move at their own unhurried pace

Kava (yaqona) is Fiji's great social lubricant — a mildly sedative drink pressed from the root of the pepper plant, shared from a communal tanoa bowl in a rhythm of claps and the word 'bula' before each round. Expect your lips and tongue to go pleasantly numb; expect, too, that a kava session is where a great deal of Koro's real business and real friendships actually happen. Some of the most useful conversations you will ever have on this island will happen cross-legged on a mat at ten at night, several bowls in, about nothing in particular.

The sevusevu is the formal presentation of kava root to a village chief or landowner when visiting or requesting permission to use village land or waters — for fishing, hiking, or simply passing through. It is a genuine courtesy, not a formality to be skipped, and doing it properly (through a local host or guide the first few times) is one of the fastest ways to be welcomed rather than merely tolerated. Do it once, do it sincerely, and you will find doors — literal and otherwise — that stay open for years.



PART FOUR

Living on Koro

Full-time, part-time, or somewhere in between — what island life actually asks of you.

Full-Time, Part-Time, and Everything Between

Owners on Koro split roughly into two temperaments: those who come for a few weeks or months a year, treating the island as a retreat from a life still centred elsewhere, and those who move their whole life here. Both are entirely valid ways to own a piece of Koro — but they call for different preparation, different caretaker arrangements, and, frankly, different personalities. Be honest with yourself early about which one you actually are, and don't feel obliged to commit to full-time island life before you've genuinely tested whether you're built for it. Plenty of very happy owners never make that leap at all, and are none the worse for it.

Great Expectations

Almost everyone arrives at Koro carrying some version of the same fantasy: a life radically simplified, stripped of the noise, clutter, and pace of wherever they came from. A slower morning. A view instead of a commute. Neighbors instead of strangers on the lot next door. None of that is naive — a good deal of it is genuinely true, and it is a large part of why this book exists at all. But it is worth naming the fantasy honestly before you buy into it completely, because the gap between the postcard and the actual Tuesday is where most disappointment on this island is manufactured.

The postcard version has no diesel generator that needs bleeding at six in the morning. It has no boat that's a day late because of weather nobody can argue with. It has no caretaker who needs clear, fair, written instructions rather than a vague wave toward 'keep an eye on things.' It has no half-day burned on a supply run for a bag of flour and a tin of nails. The actual Tuesday has all of these, regularly, and will keep having them for as long as you own property here. That is not a warning to stay away. It is a warning to arrive with the right kind of expectations rather than the wrong ones — expect different things to be hard, not fewer things.

Some newcomers arrive expecting the island to run on their old country's rhythm, just slower and prettier. It doesn't. Fiji time is a real thing, not a joke tourists tell each other, and the sooner you make peace with it, the sooner you'll actually enjoy being here instead of quietly fighting the place every day. The owners who struggle most on Koro are, almost without exception, the ones still importing a mainland sense of urgency into an island that was never going to organise itself around it.

Realities

So here is the honest ledger, stated plainly rather than left to be discovered the hard way. You will lose things to weather that you cannot control and could not have prevented — a delayed flight, a cancelled ferry, a wet season that turns a dirt road briefly to mud. You will occasionally feel very far from specialist medical care, from family events back home, from the conveniences you didn't think twice about for the first forty years of your life. You will spend real money and real time on infrastructure — solar, water catchment, a decent generator — that people living on a grid never have to think about at all.

In exchange, you get a level of quiet, a quality of relationship with your neighbors,² and a closeness to a natural world that most people who complain about 'wanting to get away from it all' never actually get around to finding. Both halves of this ledger are true at once, all the time, for as long as you own a piece of this island. Owners who do well here are the ones who stop waiting for the difficult half to go away and instead build a life that has room for it.

"The People Who Say It Cannot Be Done Should Not Interrupt Those Who Are Doing It"

This line is worth framing, or at least remembering, on the days the generator won't start and the boat is running late. Koro has always attracted a particular kind of person — one who hears that something is difficult, or unlikely, or has never quite been done this way before, and takes that as information rather than as a verdict. The estate itself, the roads, Dere Bay Resort, the whole freehold subdivision this book describes, was built by people who were, at some point, told it couldn't sensibly be done. It's worth remembering that the same is true of whatever you're trying to build here now — a business, a garden, a life. Plenty of people will have an opinion about why it won't work. Very few of them will be the ones actually doing it.

Leadership and Presence

There is no mayor of Koro Seaview Estates, no elected council with real teeth, and yet the community functions — sometimes remarkably well — because a handful of owners, at any given time, simply choose to lead by showing up. Leadership here rarely looks like giving instructions. It looks like being the one who organises the working bee on the access road, who checks in on a neighbour's place during cyclone season without being asked, who quietly sets a tone of generosity that others end up matching. If you want to see change on this island, the fastest route is almost never a committee. It's presence, repeated consistently, over years.

Fun Stuff — Group Activities

None of the above should suggest Koro is all hard work and quiet resilience. It isn't. Owners organise fishing trips, potlucks, movie nights, snorkelling expeditions to reef spots that most tourists will never see in a lifetime, birthday parties that somehow involve half the estate, and the occasional gloriously disorganised gathering that starts as one thing and ends as something else entirely. Say yes to these more often than feels efficient. They are, in the end, most of what you'll actually remember about your years here — not the boundary surveys, not the road fees, the nights on someone's deck with a full moon over Dere Bay and more good company than you expected to find on an island this size.

The Philosophy Behind Community



Island textures — carved wood and a well-worn shelf of books

Koro Seaview Estates was never going to work as a simple real-estate transaction — a lot, a title, a fence, and strangers on either side of it. It works, to the extent it does, because a critical mass of owners have chosen, actively and repeatedly, to make something of it beyond individual ownership. That choice shows up in small, unglamorous ways: sharing a boat charter rather than each chartering separately, passing along a caretaker recommendation, lending a generator part, showing up for someone else's building project the way you'd hope they'd show up for yours. None of this is written into any covenant. It's simply the accumulated behaviour of people who understood, correctly, that an island community is built the same way a garden is — a little at a time, by people who keep showing up, not by a single grand plan executed once and left alone.

This is worth saying plainly to new owners, because it is easy to buy a lot here and treat it the way you might treat a suburban plot back home — as a private, self-contained asset with no obligation to anyone beyond its own fence line. Koro will let you do that. It simply won't reward you for it the way it rewards owners who understand that the value of this place was built, and is still maintained, by a community choosing each other, repeatedly, over the alternative.

Be Open to Outcome, Not Attached to It

If this book has one piece of advice worth remembering above all the practical logistics in the chapters that follow, it's this: hold your plans for this island loosely. Almost nothing here arrives exactly as planned — not the ferry schedule, not the community garden, not the shared workshop three different owners have tried to start over the years, not even the house you're picturing right now as you read this. Materials arrive late, or different from what you ordered. Weather rewrites a week you'd planned around. A project that should take three community meetings takes eleven, and ends up better than the original idea for reasons nobody quite predicted.

The owners who are happiest here, year after year, are not the ones with the most detailed five-year plan. They're the ones who arrive with a clear sense of what they value — quiet, community, closeness to the natural world, a slower relationship with time — and stay genuinely open about the specific shape that value ends up taking. Be attached to why you came. Be much less attached to exactly how you pictured it going. Koro has an odd but consistent habit of delivering the former while completely rearranging the latter, and almost everyone who's been here long enough eventually decides that's a fair trade.



PART FIVE

Making It Official

Residency, tax, banking, and the paperwork that makes it all official.

Residency and Citizenship

Fiji does not offer a dedicated 'retirement visa' as such, but two long-established pathways cover most owners' needs, and both should be verified directly with Fiji's Department of Immigration before you rely on any figure printed here, as thresholds are periodically revised:

RESIDENCY PATHWAYS (VERIFY CURRENT FIGURES WITH FIJI IMMIGRATION)

Residence Permit on Assured Income — applicants 45+, an assured income sufficient not to become a public charge, and (as of recent guidance) a deposit of roughly F\$100,000 into a local bank account, which may be reduced or waived with proof of Fijian property ownership

Investor Permit — a 3-year permit for a minimum ~F\$50,000 investment, or a 7-year permit for a minimum ~F\$500,000 investment, both requiring a registered Fijian company

Visitor entry — most Western passport holders receive a 4-month visa-free stay on arrival, extendable to 6 months

Naturalisation — generally available after 5 years of lawful residence within the preceding 10 years

Every one of these numbers moves. Confirm current thresholds, required documents, and processing times directly at immigration.gov.fj before you build a plan around them.

Taxation

Fiji does not tax pensions, social security, or other passive income you bring in to live on, provided you are not working locally, though this remains an area where a qualified cross-border tax advisor earns their fee — your home country's rules about foreign residency, not Fiji's, are usually the more complicated half of the equation. Fiji itself currently has no capital gains tax and no wealth tax, a top personal income tax rate around 20%, and VAT of 15% on most goods and services — figures worth reconfirming with a local accountant, as fiscal policy shifts periodically.

Banking, Money, and Getting Paid

ANZ and Westpac remain the two major banks with a presence relevant to Fiji-based owners; both offer online banking, though international transfers and 'pay anyone' style features vary in convenience between them — check current offerings directly, as both have modernised their digital banking considerably since 2014. Western Union remains available for receiving money from abroad. For everyday international payments and simple invoicing, most owners now lean on standard tools like Wise, PayPal, or a card-reader service rather than the older fax-and-branch-visit routine — pick whichever your own bank integrates with most cleanly.

Mail, Medical Care, and Insurance

A virtual mail-forwarding service (in the US, providers like Earth Class Mail; most Western countries have an equivalent) remains the cleanest way to keep a permanent home-country mailing address once you've left. For medical care, Koro has a hospital in Nasau plus nursing stations in outlying villages, capable of routine care, wound treatment, and stabilisation — but with no X-ray or lab facilities on the island, so anything serious still means transport to Suva, and in a genuine emergency, medical evacuation. This is the single detail worth over-preparing for: carry health insurance that explicitly includes medical evacuation coverage (specialists commonly recommend

policies covering USD \$500,000 or more in evacuation costs), since transport off-island is the real bottleneck in any medical emergency here, not the quality of care once you arrive in Suva.

Shipping a Container to Fiji

New residents typically have a window (verify current duration with Fiji Revenue & Customs Services) after their residency permit is granted to import a container of used household goods duty-free; before that, a bond based on assessed value may apply. Work with an experienced international shipping agent on your end and a local customs/import agent on the Fiji end — most shipping companies can recommend a counterpart — and check the current Fiji tariff schedule (available from FRCS) for anything you're bringing in that isn't clearly 'used household goods.'



PART SIX

Your Island Property

Boundaries, building, safety, and the small infrastructure of daily life on your own lot.

Boundaries, Setbacks, and Legalities

Koro Seaview Estates lots are zoned residential, one family per lot, with room for two homes on full-acre parcels and one on half-acre parcels. Standard setbacks are 6 metres from any road and 3 metres from adjoining boundaries, extending to 20 metres from the high-water mark on waterfront lots — confirm your specific survey and any lot-specific variations before you plan a build. Lots are freehold under the Torrens title system, the same land registration framework used in Australia and New Zealand, which gives owners a genuinely secure title by regional standards; a title search is still sensible on any resale purchase.

Clearing Your Lot, Responsibly

Resist the urge to clear more than you need. A big tree takes thirty years to grow and thirty minutes to fell, and the shade, bird habitat, and soil stability it provides are worth more than the view you'd gain by cutting it. Light clearing to establish a building footprint is normal; wholesale clearing is treated as a breach of the purchase contract on most Koro lots and can carry real consequences. Ask before you cut anything you're not certain about.

Safety

Petty theft happens on Koro, as it does everywhere, generally opportunistic rather than organised. A visible, well-built lock, shutters that let a house close up completely when empty, and a good relationship with neighbours who'll notice if something's wrong do more real work than any single security gadget. Owners who quietly avoid flaunting wealth and who build genuine relationships with the surrounding community consistently report feeling — and being — safer.

Caretakers

A local caretaker is close to essential for any owner who isn't on Koro full-time — for basic maintenance, security-by-presence, and simply keeping an eye on things between visits. Ask the resort management or established neighbours for a current recommendation rather than relying on any name printed in an old edition of this book; agree pay, hours, and duties clearly and in writing, and pay promptly and fairly. A caretaker who serves one or two properties well beats one stretched across many, and a good working relationship here is one of the most valuable things you'll build on the island.

Growing Your Own



A finished home on Koro — the payoff for years of steady building

Koro's volcanic soil is generous, and most owners plant at least some of what they eat — cassava, taro, breadfruit, papaya, and a long list of tropical fruit that simply doesn't need much encouragement here. If you're away for long stretches, arrange with your caretaker to plant and harvest on a schedule that doesn't require your presence; if you're on-island, planting becomes one of the genuine pleasures of the place rather than a chore.

Getting Supplies

Koro has a handful of small shops and a resort-adjacent store for basics, but the honest advice hasn't changed since 2014: bring what you need from Suva. Stock up on non-perishables, tools, and anything specialized before you leave the main island, and build a good relationship with neighbors for the inevitable trading of surplus garden produce, tools, and favors that makes island life work.

Building on Koro



Framing a deck with the rainforest and bay behind

Work with builders experienced specifically in outer-island Fiji conditions — cyclone-rated construction is not optional here, and the lesson of Cyclone Winston in 2016 is written into every insurance policy and engineer's certificate now required for cover. Solar power and rainwater catchment remain the standard off-grid utility setup for most homes, sized generously, since there is no reticulated electricity or water on Koro. Container homes and imported prefabricated structures both remain viable options and both come with their own import, customs, and engineering paperwork — budget real time for that process, not just money.

Getting Around, Recycling, and the Small Infrastructure of Daily Life

Diesel vehicles remain the practical choice, since Koro has no import-your-own fuel refinery but does have a working biofuel option for those set up to use it; stick to common makes with locally available parts. Trash disposal is still a genuine constraint of small-island life — non-recyclables are largely burned, plastics minimised and reused where possible, and food waste composted back into the same gardens the fruit came from. It is, in its own way, a more honest relationship with consumption than most owners had before they arrived.



PART SEVEN

Making a Life, Not Just a Living

Making a life here, not just a living — and a directory to get you started.

Surviving in Paradise: Know Yourself

If you are seriously thinking about making the move to paradise, here are two words worth sitting with before any of the practical advice in this chapter: know yourself. You need a real, honest answer to whether you can sustain yourself and the people you love here, financially and otherwise. The last thing you want is a beautiful home on a tropical island, surrounded by the people you moved here for, only to have to explain to them that the money has run out and it's time to move back to wherever you came from. Unless you're arriving with a nest egg genuinely large enough to carry you through the years — with something left over for whoever comes after you — you will need a real plan for making a living here, not just a plan for arriving.

That is not meant to frighten anyone off. It's meant to save you from finding this out the hard way, three years in, after you've already fallen in love with the place — which you will.

Making a Living on Koro

There is no job board on Koro. Opportunity here is noticed, not posted — a gap in what the community needs, met with genuine effort, and usually a fair amount of entrepreneurial stubbornness. Recent conversation on the island points to real, ongoing openings in rental and property management for the growing number of absentee owners, small-scale food production and provisioning, boat and equipment maintenance, and hospitality roles tied to the island's three resorts, including the incoming Koula Beach Resort. If you have a skill your neighbours or the wider world might pay for, this is a place that rewards making it happen yourself — nobody is going to organise the opportunity for you, but almost nobody will stand in your way either. If starting something alone feels daunting, find a few neighbours who share the itch and build it together. That, more than any single business plan, is the actual Koro way of doing things.

Bartering, Renting, and Doing Business

An informal exchange economy runs alongside the cash one — produce, skills, tools, and favours trade hands constantly, and the Koro community's own online groups are the best current channel for both bartering and finding out what's needed. Renting out a Koro home to visitors is possible but involves specific zoning and business registration steps; check current requirements with TDC and Fiji's investment authority before listing anything.

Schooling and Pets



Children on Koro, flower crowns and all

Koro has schools up to secondary level distributed across its villages; families relocating with children should visit and speak directly with current administrators about capacity, curriculum, and language of instruction well before committing to a move. Bringing pets into Fiji involves quarantine and import permit requirements set by the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji — start that paperwork months in advance, as it is genuinely one of the slower bureaucratic processes an incoming owner will face.

The Resorts in 2026

Dere Bay Resort and Koro Beach Resort remain the social and logistical heart of Expat Koro — pool, restaurant, dive shop, and moorings for Dere Bay; a small library, games, and a budget-friendly base for Koro Beach, now with Starlink-backed Wi-Fi that would have seemed like science fiction in 2014. The Forwaller family, along with a group of investors bought the resorts in 2025 and is in the process of renovating and expanding, bringing positive change.

Koula Beach Resort, an adults-only luxury property located on the former Matana Estate, is expected to open on the island in late 2028 and will be worth a look for owners curious how far the island's tourism footprint has grown since this book's first edition.

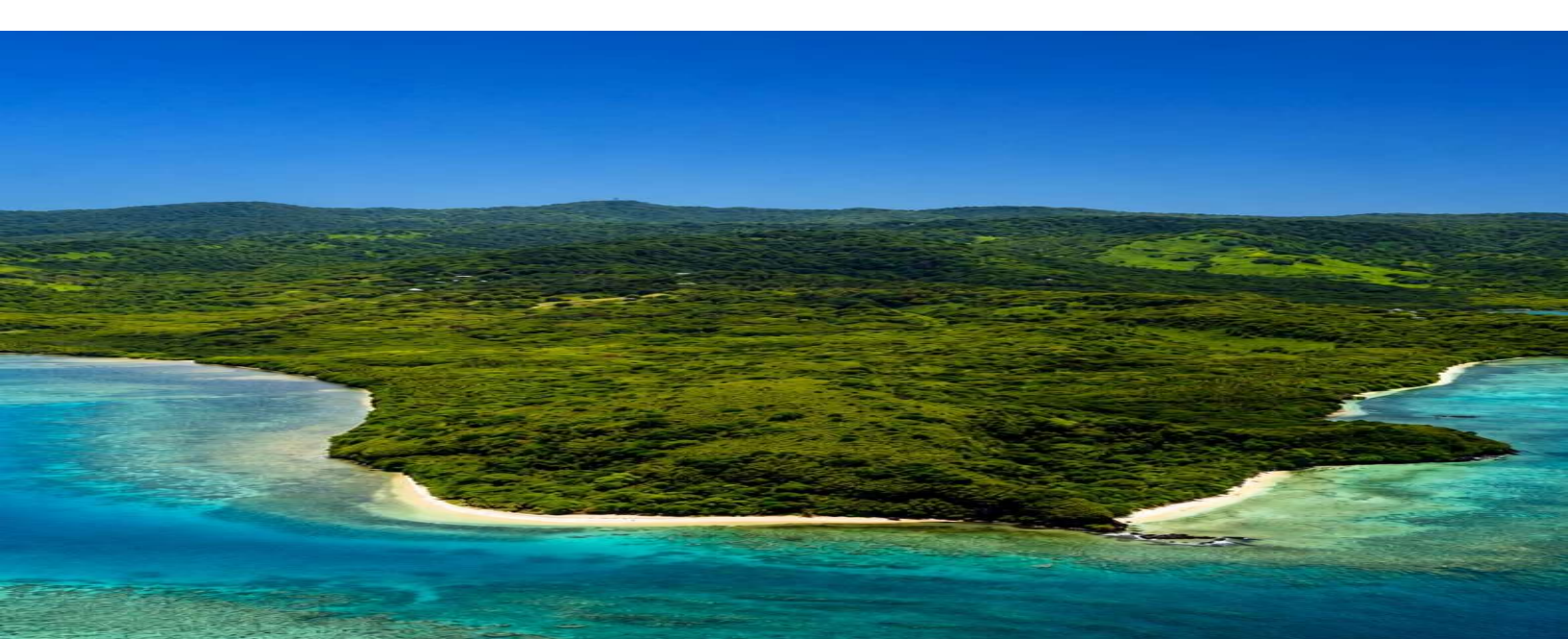
Last Word

Koro hasn't gotten easier to reach since 2014 — if anything, the ferry situation has gotten harder. What has changed is everything around the edges: better connectivity, more medical and insurance clarity, a clearer residency process, and, twelve years on, a real community of owners who've quietly proven the original bet correct. The island itself needed no updating at all. It was, and remains, worth the trouble of getting to.

Directory — Where to Start Looking

Names and phone numbers age quickly on a small island; categories and current official sources don't. Use this as a starting map, not a phone book — always confirm specifics directly.

Category	What it covers	Start here
Development & Estate Administration	Road fees, boundaries, lot administration	Julian Realty and Julian Hennings.
Accommodation on Koro	Dere Bay Resort, Koro Beach Resort, Koula Beach Resort (opening late 2026)	koroislandresorts.com
Immigration & Residency	Residence on Assured Income, Investor Permits, visitor extensions	Fiji Department of Immigration — immigration.gov.fj
Customs & Shipping	Container imports, tariff schedules, yacht clearance (Form C2-C)	Fiji Revenue & Customs Service — frcs.org.fj
Domestic Air Travel	Suva–Koro scheduled flight (weekly, confirm current day)	Fiji Airways / Fiji Link — fijiairways.com
Inter-Island Ferries	Status changes frequently; confirm before relying on any operator	Check Koro Island community Facebook group for current operators & schedules
Medical Care (Koro)	Hospital in Nasau; nursing stations in outlying villages; no X-ray/lab on-island	Contact TDC or resort staff for current hospital contact details
Medical Care (Suva)	Colonial War Memorial Hospital (public); private hospitals for faster care	CWM Hospital · Suva private hospital directories
Banking	ANZ and Westpac both operate in Fiji with online banking	anz.com/fiji · westpac.com.fj
Land Transport & Vehicle Registration	Vehicle registration, driving licences	Land Transport Authority — ltafiji.com
Biosecurity / Pet Import	Quarantine and import permits for pets	Biosecurity Authority of Fiji — baf.com.fj



KORO ISLAND, FIJI

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