

## ***Discover somewhere completely different!***

Virtually untouched by commercial development, the Solomon Islands are a natural paradise located southeast of Papua New Guinea and only three hours by air from Australia. The people of the Solomons still practice a traditional way of life, preferring to respect the old customs and traditions. They believe in maintaining and preserving their beautiful unspoilt environment. The islands are covered in tropical rainforest and their steep hilly slopes are interspersed with swift flowing creeks, waterfalls and peaceful lagoons.

### **Capital**

The Solomon Islands is geographically fragmented with six main islands and hundreds of small islands and hundreds of small islands including man-made atolls. The main islands are Choiseul, Guadalcanal, Santa Isabel, San Cristobal, Malaita and New Georgia. Volcanoes with varying degrees of activity are situated on some of the larger islands, while many of the smaller islands are simply tiny atolls covered in sand and palm trees. The Capital of the Solomon Islands is Honiara on the island of Guadalcanal.

### **The People**

The islanders are smiling, warm friendly people, mostly Melanesian (90%), with some Polynesian, Gilbertese, European and Asian. There is no segregation between races and there are more than 120 indigenous languages, including English Pidgin. English is spoken throughout the islands.

### **History**

The Solomon Islands were probably discovered about five thousand years ago by the Austronesians. The Spanish were the first Europeans to visit the islands, Alvaro de Mendana naming them the Solomons. He also named the islands of Santa Isabel, Guadalcanal and San Cristobal. The Solomons became a fully independent nation in 1978 and today the country operates under a system of nine provinces. The national parliament adopted a Westminster system and has a democratic government.

### **Nature**

Lush tropical rainforests cover most of the island group. Exotic orchids, ferns and palms are found everywhere and butterflies and exotic birds are abundant. There are more than 70 species of reptiles. A variety of trees and shrubs have been introduced along with fruits and vegetables.

## **Investment**

Solomon Islands is endowed with abundant natural resources that offer unique investment opportunities with diversified investment potential in several areas. Foreign investments are encouraged on all productive sectors that will both benefit the investor and Solomon Islands as a whole.

The Government of Solomon Islands places private sector investment and development as an important priority in its strategy to achieve self reliance, economic independence and sustainability. In view of this policy, the government sees foreign investment participation in the development of Solomon Islands as a vehicle to achieve this aim and has enacted a series of legislation that make Foreign Direct Investment more flexible and rewarding in the Solomon Islands. Investment projects that fall within priority sectors may have special investment coverage. The criteria to qualify for the different incentives varies but once met, the recipient obtains full benefits which can be a tax holiday, import duty exemption or any other investment incentives packages. Benefits, however, will be dependent on the type of incentive awarded to the potential investor.

Foreign investors will benefit from a series of investment incentives, clear investment guidelines, undistorted regulations, investments guarantees, and more importantly, a secure environment for doing business in the country.

## **Climate**

Tropical – Average 29 degrees Celsius. November to April is wet season.

## **Time Zone**

GMT + 11. AEST + 1 hour.

## **Currency**

Solomon Island dollars (SBD).

## **Visas & Health**

British Commonwealth, US and Western Europeans with a valid passport and onward or return ticket are granted a visitors permit on arrival. Citizens of member countries of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) are exempted from visa requirements.

## **Air Travel**

Solomon Airlines and Air Vanuatu