Nauru

Pre Tour Information

Off the beaten path...

Nauru, a small island nation nestled in the central Pacific Ocean, beckons travellers with its unique blend of history, natural beauty, and cultural richness. Known as the "Pleasant Island," Nauru boasts a fascinating past shaped by its phosphate mining industry, once known as the richest per capita in the world. Today, remnants of this history, such as the abandoned phosphate mines and Japanese World War II relics, stand as poignant reminders of the island's journey.

Geographically, Nauru spans just 21 square kilometres, making it one of the world's smallest countries. Despite its size, the island offers diverse attractions. Visitors can explore pristine coral reefs teeming with marine life, ideal for snorkelling and diving enthusiasts. The island's lush interior features dense vegetation and bird sanctuaries, providing opportunities for nature lovers to immerse themselves in its unspoiled landscapes.

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Managing Expectations

Nauru is one of those places that doesn't demand to be understood at a glance. On the surface it's tiny, remote, and quiet. But under that surface is a living island with layers of history, community, and cultural switching between old and new. You will run into unexpected moments − here's a heads-up so you can roll with them.

Limited tourist infrastructure is the norm
Don't expect multiple hotel options, mass transit, or a bustling visitor economy. Tourism is very small in scale. What that means for you is: book well ahead, be flexible, and accept that some facilities will be modest. Your guide will often serve as your navigator for what is practical and available."

Modesty and respect are more than polite suggestions
Nauru is relatively conservative, and local standards favour modest dress, especially outside beach zones. It is wise to cover shoulders, avoid overly revealing swimwear off the sand, and reserve "beach chic" for the beach. Being polite about how you present yourself will go further than you think.

Bring your own rhythm (things may not run like clockwork)
Clocks and schedules are gentler here. Because of limited services, logistical constraints, and fewer resources, delays are more likely than elsewhere. Be ready to wait (or have your guide buffer your agenda). With fewer options, you'll mostly travel on the service that is available rather than the one you ideally wanted.

English is widely used − but value local language too
While Nauruan is the traditional language, English is widely understood, especially in official & tourist settings. Still, learning a few basic Nauruan phrases or local greetings can signal respect and endear you to locals.

Community and relationships matter deeply
Nauruans value connection, kinship, and respect for elders. In many interactions − at markets, in villages, during ceremonies − how you approach someone (tone, greeting, courtesy) carries as much weight as what you say. Take cues, match warmth, and lean into listening.

Oral traditions and storytelling are alive
Because Nauru had no long written tradition, oral forms (stories, chants, songs) remain important. When you're at cultural events or in communities, let the stories come first. Ask to listen − you'll often hear things that don't make it into guidebooks.

Dining may be communal, but not always oversupplied
Fish, coconut, pandanus, root vegetables − these are staples. Portions and variety may feel limited compared to big cities. Be ready to share, to wait for local ingredients, and to accept what is available rather than what you hoped for.

Don't expect massive crowds – that's the charm
You'll rarely be shoulder to shoulder with other tourists. Nauru's remoteness is part of its magic. That said, the quieter moments mean every interaction with a local becomes more significant, more memorable.

Explore both "above ground" and "inside the island"
Much of Nauru's interior (the "topside") is heavily mined and rugged − in many parts not suitable for casual walking. Your guide should help you pick safe zones to visit. Meanwhile, the coastal edges, reefs, lagoon, and villages will tell a more human, living story of the island.

Bring backup for basic systems
Internet, phone signal, power − these may be patchy. Bring a power bank, an offline map app, a good camera, and patience. If your guide offers download zones or local SIMs, take them. Think "small-island mode" rather than city convenience.

Small courtesies get big return
In a place where life is simpler, your manners sing louder. Greet with a smile. If you help carry something, it won't go unnoticed. Being attentive and respectful − to property, people, pace − will often make more positive impression than any expensive gesture.

Final Thought
Visiting Nauru is not like checking off monuments or ticking boxes. It is letting yourself land in a place where silence, stories, humility, and space are the real spectacles. You'll find less friction, more quiet wonder − and perhaps a soft echo of what it feels like when the world slows down. Travel gently. Be curious. Listen quietly. You'll leave richer than you anticipated.

General Travel Information

Local Emergency

- Fire and rescue services: Call 112
- Medical emergencies: Call 111 or go directly to the hospital.
- Police: Call 110 or go to your local police station.

Consular & Embassy Assistance

We strongly advise all travellers to take a proactive approach to their safety and well-being by familiarizing themselves with the contact details and address of their local embassy within their destination before embarking on their journey. Knowing how to reach your embassy can provide invaluable support in case of emergencies, unexpected situations, or the need for consular assistance. This essential information ensures that you're well-prepared and equipped to navigate any challenges that might arise during your travels. Your embassy is your lifeline in a foreign land, offering guidance, assistance, and a sense of security while you explore new horizons.

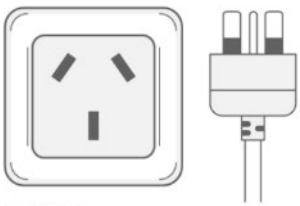
Staying in Touch

Before departing your home country check with your phone supplier to see if it is compatible with the mobile phone networks in the countries that you are travelling to, and how much will it cost to use it abroad. In some of the more rural reaches of Nauru, cell phone coverage is not possible.

Mobile phone service in Nauru is provided primarily by Digicel. Prepaid physical SIM cards are available at the airport and from local shops. If you plan to use one, make sure your phone is unlocked and GSM-compatible. Coverage is generally reliable in populated areas such as Aiwo and Yaren, but can be spotty in more remote parts of the island.

Wi-Fi access is limited. It's typically available at hotels, cafes, and some public buildings, though it may come with usage caps or extra fees. Because Nauru's internet infrastructure is limited, public Wi-Fi hotspots are rare, and speeds can be slow and unstable. Download essential apps and information before you arrive, and consider purchasing a local SIM with data for more consistent access.

Electricity


Type I

The standard voltage in Nauru is 240V, with a frequency of 50Hz. If your devices do not support this range, you'll need a voltage converter.

The power outlets used are Type I, which are the same as in Australia and New Zealand. If your plugs are different, you'll need a compatible travel adaptor. These may be available at the airport or in some local shops, but it's best to bring one with you.

Responsible Tourism

We believe strongly in low-impact or rather positive-impact tourism. Broadly speaking this means that we aim to minimise the negative aspects of tourism on the local cultures and environments that we visit and highlight the positive aspects. Please visit our website for further details and suggestions on how you can be a responsible traveller. https://www.crooked-compass.com/responsible-tourism/

Facts & Figures

Nauru is a small island country located in the central Pacific Ocean, just south of the equator. It lies northeast of Australia and west of Kiribati, in the Micronesian region of Oceania. At just 21 square kilometres, Nauru is the third smallest country in the world by land area and has no official capital. Its flat terrain is surrounded by a narrow coastal strip, with a raised interior plateau formed by extensive phosphate mining − a central feature of the island's geography.

Population & Cities

Nauru has a population of approximately 10,000 people, making it the third least populous country in the world. The largest settlement is Yaren, which functions as the de facto capital and administrative centre. Other key districts include Aiwo, Meneng, and Buada, each home to local communities but no cities in the conventional sense. Most of the population lives along the coast, as much of the inland area is uninhabitable due to past mining.

Government & Economy

Nauru is a republic with a parliamentary system. The President is both head of state and head of government, elected by the 19-member unicameral parliament.

The economy has historically been dominated by phosphate mining, which once gave Nauru the highest per-capita income in the world. However, as reserves dwindled, the economy declined sharply. Today, the country relies on a mix of aid, phosphate exports, offshore processing services, and fishing licences. A significant part of the economy also comes from hosting Australia's offshore immigration detention centre.

Language

Both Nauruan and English are official languages. Nauruan, a Micronesian language, is used in everyday conversation and cultural life. English is commonly used in government, business, education, and tourism, making communication relatively easy for visitors. In rural areas or among older residents, Nauruan may be more prevalent.

Useful Phrases
Hello: Tarawong (TAH-rah-wong)
Thank you: Tubwa (TOOB-wah)
Yes: Eo (AY-oh)
No: Aonga (AH-ong-ah)
Please: Aeo (AH-eh-oh)
Excuse me / Sorry: Ekamawir omo (eh-kah-MAH-weer OH-moh)
How are you?: E ita? (eh EE-tah?)
I don't understand: Ng ewak (ng EH-wak)
Where is...?: E maka...? (eh MAH-kah...?)
How much is this?: E ita eiyin? (eh EE-tah EH-yin?)

Time Zone

Nauru operates on Nauru Time (NRT), which is UTC+12:00. There is no daylight saving time, so the time remains constant year-round.

Religion

Nauru is predominantly Christian. The largest religious groups are the Nauru Congregational Church (about 60%) and Roman Catholics (approximately 33%). There are also small communities of Seventh-day Adventists and other Christian denominations. Religion plays a significant role in public and community life, particularly on Sundays.

National Holidays

- Independence Day – 31 January: Celebrates Nauru's independence from joint Australian, British, and New Zealand administration in 1968. Expect public celebrations, flag-raising ceremonies, and community events.

- Constitution Day – 17 May: Marks the adoption of Nauru's constitution in 1968. This national holiday is observed with speeches, cultural performances, and reduced government services.

- Angam Day – 26 October: A uniquely Nauruan holiday that commemorates the survival of the Nauruan people after their population once dropped below 1,500. It's a day of reflection and pride, featuring traditional storytelling, songs, and public events.

Government offices and some businesses close on these days, and services may be limited.

Medical Information

Medical Supplies

This is one adventure where you don't want to forget your medications; it may be hard to get them in the remote reaches of Nauru.

- Pack medications in your carry-on bag to avoid loss and to have them handy. Ensure any liquids or gels are less than 100ml.
- Keep medicines in their original, labelled containers for a quicker security screen at the airport and a better experience if you get stopped by customs while overseas.
- Bring copies of your prescriptions, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name, to be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications.
- Carry a letter from your doctor explaining the medications you are using and that they are for personal use.
- Consider bringing a filled prescription antibiotic for gastrointestinal illness, electrolytes and motion sickness medicine if you are susceptible.

Crooked Compass highly recommends that you travel with your first aid kit.

Please refer to a travel vaccination specialist for the most up-to-date advice about vaccinations for your destination(s). We encourage you to check with your healthcare provider and take their advice based on your current state of health.

Please follow the link to check the TravelVax website:
👉 TravelVax (https://www.travelvax.com.au/)

Medical Care

Medical care is provided primarily by the Republic of Nauru Hospital. The hospital offers basic services, but specialised care and emergency facilities are limited. Travellers should bring a supply of necessary medications as local pharmacies may not carry specific prescriptions. Comprehensive travel insurance is crucial, including coverage for medical evacuation, as serious conditions often require transport to Australia or another country. Be aware that medical staff may have limited English proficiency. For minor issues, basic first aid supplies should be carried.

Water Safety

Tap water in Nauru is not safe to drink. Always use bottled water, which is widely available in shops and hotels. Avoid using tap water to brush your teeth or wash raw fruit and vegetables. In hot weather, it's important to stay hydrated − carry a reusable bottle and refill it only from safe, confirmed sources. Ice in drinks should also be avoided unless you know it's made from purified water.

Food Safety

Food in Nauru is generally safe when prepared in hotels and reputable restaurants. Local meals often include fish, rice, and root vegetables such as taro, with tropical fruits on the side. Be cautious with street food, especially anything that's been sitting in the sun. Eat at busy places where food is cooked to order. Peel fruit yourself and avoid leafy greens or anything raw that may have been rinsed with tap water. During group tours, meals are carefully selected for hygiene and safety.

Dietary Considerations

Managing dietary restrictions in Nauru requires advance preparation. Options for vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, dairy-free, or other common diets are limited due to the island's small size and reliance on imported goods.

Vegetarians may find some flexibility with dishes based on rice, taro, and tropical fruits, but most local meals are centred around fish, poultry, or canned meats. **Vegan** travellers should be especially cautious, as even seemingly plant-based dishes may include fish sauce, coconut cream with added dairy, or condiments made with animal products.

Gluten-free travellers will need to avoid most processed foods, as ingredient labels can be inconsistent. Bring your own snacks or staples (like gluten-free crackers, muesli bars, or bread), and carry a dietary card in English and Nauruan to explain your needs. Grocery stores in Aiwo and Yaren may carry limited imported items, but don't count on consistent availability.

Dining in restaurants or communal meals means you'll often eat what's available − communicate your needs to your guide in advance, but also prepare to supplement with self-catered items if necessary. Nauru's food culture is informal and accommodating where possible, but limited supply chains and local habits may create occasional challenges.

Safety & Security

Reasonable Precautions

- Travellers are advised to exercise good sense, take some reasonable precautions and avoid irresponsible behaviour like carrying too much cash and displaying valuables like cameras, phones and expensive jewellery
- Always exercise caution
- Do not take unnecessary valuables with you
- A money belt or something similar, worn close to your body, is the best way to carry passports, airline tickets and money
- DO NOT leave any valuables in ANY hotel room, please use SAFETY DEPOSIT BOXES - items are left at the individual's risk
- Pickpockets operate everywhere, particularly in tourist areas and crowded markets. You must always exercise care
- Be aware that anything left unsupervised may be liable to theft

Travel Advisories

Please use the link below to check the Smart Traveller website and register your travel:

👉 Smart Traveller (http://smartraveller.gov.au)

LGBTQIA+

All travellers face risks overseas. Risks can be higher for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTIA+) people in some destinations. It's your responsibility to get the facts first and take steps to reduce your risks.

👉 Advice for LGBTQIA+ travellers (https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/before-you-go/who-you-are/LGBTQIA)

Drug & Alcohol Policy

Under no circumstances are any illegal drugs allowed on any part of the trip. Anyone discovered in possession of any such drugs will be asked to leave the tour immediately without question or refund. Remote communities and some cultures are deemed as 'dry', meaning that no alcoholic drinks may be purchased or consumed. Please be respectful of this.

Entry Requirements

Crooked Compass does not provide visa or health advice. The information in this section is for general guidance only.

Please ensure you check and comply with visa requirements for the country you are visiting. For the most accurate and up-to-date information, contact your nearest embassy or consulate. If you need assistance, we recommend using a specialist visa agency such as CIBT Visas.

Visas

If applicable, you must obtain the appropriate visas before embarking on your trip. Country entry regulations can change daily, your travel agent can provide you with visa information. Please consult your relevant embassy for all details, such as opening hours or costs. Certain visas cannot be obtained on arrival, and during the peak months, it may take longer than normal to get them. Please allow extra time to do this. Crooked Compass encourages the use of a visa specialist service such as CIBT Visas to ensure you have the correct and up-to-date information surrounding visa requirements for your destination(s). Visa and other entry and exit conditions (such as currency, customs and quarantine regulations) can change at short notice.

EACH CLIENT IS SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING ALL NECESSARY VISAS BEFORE JOINING A TOUR. Crooked Compass does not accept responsibility for changes in regulations or requirements for visas. The information provided is given in good faith.

Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all Crooked Compass itineraries. You must be covered for personal accident, medical expenses, cancellation, curtailment, repatriation, and more. In remote areas, your policy must include helicopter evacuation in case of emergency.

Be aware that many adventure activities — such as trekking, white-water rafting, or bungee jumping — are often excluded from standard insurance policies. If you plan to join such activities, please check your coverage or purchase additional protection. We also recommend keeping a photocopy of your insurance documents separate from the original while travelling.

Global Rescue

Have you considered evacuation coverage? Crooked Compass partners with Global Rescue, a world leader in medical and security evacuation and advisory services. Unlike most standard travel insurance, Global Rescue offers field rescue from the point of injury or illness, anywhere in the world.

👉 Global Rescue

Passports

- Must be in good condition
- Must be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return
- Must have 4 blank pages
- By law, you must carry your passport at all times when travelling in Nauru

We recommend you carry colour photocopies of key documents, including the photo page of your passport, plus any applicable visas, air itinerary, credit cards, and an alternative form of ID. Add emergency phone numbers like your credit card company and the number for your travel insurance plan. Store copies separate from the originals.

Money

Local Currency

Nauru uses the Australian Dollar (AUD) for all transactions. You'll encounter the familiar mix of plastic polymer notes and metallic coins. Notes come in vibrant denominations from $5 to $100, while coins range from 5 cents to $2. There's no local currency pegging or exchange rate to worry about − AUD is the official and only currency in circulation.

Currency: Australian Dollar
Currency code: AUD
Central Bank: Reserve Bank of Australia (used by Nauru)
Currency symbol: $
Currency subunit: Cents
Nicknames: "Aussie", "buck"
Banknotes: $5, $10, $20, $50, $100
Coins: 5¢, 10¢, 20¢, 50¢, $1, $2

Payment Methods

While larger hotels and some government offices may accept Visa and Mastercard, cash remains essential. Many smaller shops, markets, and eateries operate on a cash-only basis. ATMs are limited − mainly located in Aiwo and a few hotels − and may impose daily withdrawal limits and high transaction fees, especially on international cards.

You should plan to carry enough cash for daily expenses, especially if you're heading to more remote parts of the island or taking part in local activities. It's wise to bring new, undamaged AUD banknotes to avoid issues with acceptance.

Notifying Card Providers: Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges, such as charges or withdrawals from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company and/or bank that you will be using your cards abroad.

Tipping Culture

Tipping is not customary in Nauru. It's not expected in restaurants, hotels, taxis, or general services. However, if you receive particularly exceptional service, a small token of appreciation may be welcomed − though not required. Just like much of the island, tipping practices reflect Nauru's informal, straightforward approach.

A note about tipping your guide and driver: We realise that tipping is a sensitive subject for all travellers. While tips are widely accepted, we would like to stress that this is at your own personal discretion. While everyone is recommended to tip based on services rendered, our clients often ask that we provide some basic guidelines. Our suggestion is USD10 per day for your tour guide and USD3- 5 per day for your driver (payable in local currency). If hiking, a good idea is to allow around USD10 per day for porters.

Everyday Expenses

If your tour covers accommodation, guides, activities, and breakfasts, you'll primarily need spending money for extras like lunches, dinners, drinks, small souvenirs, and tips. Always keep some small bills on hand for spontaneous purchases or tipping.

Costs in Nauru reflect the island's remote location and reliance on imported goods. Here's what you might expect to pay day-to-day:

- Bottle of water: ~AUD 2.00
- Cup of coffee: ~AUD 4.00
- Mid-range restaurant meal: AUD 20.00 – 30.00
- High-end restaurant meal: AUD 40.00 – 60.00
- Taxi (short ride): AUD 5.00 – 10.00
- Souvenirs (handicrafts, shell jewellery): AUD 10.00 – 30.00

Money Requested on Tour

Whilst every precaution is taken to ensure all services as per your itinerary are pre-paid before your arrival, in areas where tourism is still being developed, you may, on occasion, be asked for additional funds for incidentals such as fuel and water. Under no circumstances are you to part with cash to any crew or local person claiming to work for Crooked Compass. Should you be requested to provide such funds, please contact the emergency contact number immediately for support. Crooked Compass is unable to take responsibility without prior authorisation from head office for monies handed over to the crew or local persons.

Getting There

Airports

Most visitors arrive in Nauru via **Nauru International Airport (INU)**, located in the district of Yaren. This is the country's only airport, and one of the smallest international airports in the world. The arrival experience is simple and unhurried, with basic immigration and customs procedures. Facilities are minimal but functional.

There are only a few international routes, primarily operated by Nauru Airlines, with flights connecting the island to Brisbane (Australia), Tarawa (Kiribati), Majuro (Marshall Islands), and Honiara (Solomon Islands). Delays can occur due to weather or limited flight schedules, so it's best to keep your travel plans flexible.

A departure tax of AUD 50 is applied to all outbound passengers, but this is usually included in the cost of your airfare − check with your airline to confirm. Upon arrival, you may find small kiosks offering snacks, bottled water, and local SIM cards, though availability can vary.

Border Crossings

Since Nauru is a single-island nation with no land borders, all entries and exits take place through the airport or, more rarely, by sea on diplomatic or cargo vessels. Travellers must arrange their visa in advance, as Nauru does not offer visa-on-arrival services. Immigration officials may ask for proof of accommodation and onward or return tickets. Entry is usually smooth but be prepared for occasional delays or additional questions if arriving as part of a group.

Climate

Nauru lies just south of the equator in the central Pacific Ocean, which gives it a tropical climate marked by high humidity, intense sunlight, and consistently warm temperatures year-round. The island's flat geography − a narrow coastal fringe surrounding an uplifted, mined-out interior plateau − means there is little variation in elevation, and no mountain breezes or rain shadows to moderate conditions. With no rivers or lakes, rainfall is a critical water source and influences everything from local gardening to water supply.

Rainfall tends to be heavy but brief, especially during the wet season, with the central plateau often staying drier than the more exposed coastal areas. Sunshine is abundant, and daytime temperatures typically range from 26° C to 32° C, though it often feels hotter due to humidity. Heat radiates off the mined-out limestone in the interior, making inland exploration particularly demanding. Along the coast, occasional sea breezes offer minor relief, but the UV index remains high all year − sun protection is essential.

Despite its consistent temperatures, Nauru experiences distinct wet and dry seasons, which affect both daily life and travel conditions across the island.

Month	Record high (°C)	Average high (°C)	Daily mean (°C)	Average low (°C)	Record low (°C)	Average rain (mm)	Precipitation days	Relative humidity (%)	Sunshine hours
Jan	28.7	28.7	28.4	27.6	27.6	329.1	17.4	76.2	10.6
Feb	28.6	28.6	28.2	27.5	27.5	277.2	17.0	76.7	10.3
Mar	28.6	28.6	28.2	27.5	27.5	324.3	19.5	77.8	10.3
Apr	28.7	28.7	28.4	27.7	27.7	307.0	21.1	77.0	10.5
May	28.8	28.8	28.6	27.9	27.9	221.1	19.5	76.1	10.7
Jun	28.8	28.8	28.5	27.9	27.9	191.8	16.1	74.3	10.9
Jul	28.8	28.8	28.4	27.7	27.7	194.9	18.8	73.8	10.9
Aug	28.7	28.7	28.4	27.7	27.7	208.7	17.9	73.2	10.9
Sep	28.7	28.7	28.4	27.6	27.6	171.7	16.7	73.5	11.0
Oct	28.6	28.6	28.3	27.4	27.4	191.4	11.4	73.5	10.8
Nov	28.5	28.5	28.3	27.6	27.6	159.7	12.6	72.8	11.1
Dec	28.7	28.7	28.4	27.6	27.6	229.4	14.6	75.0	10.7

Seasonality

Nauru has two main seasons: the wet season (November to February) and the dry season (March to October).

Wet Season (November to February)

The wet season in Nauru brings high humidity, intense heat, and short but powerful downpours. Rain tends to arrive in sudden bursts, often accompanied by thunderstorms and strong gusts of wind, particularly in the afternoons. Daily temperatures typically sit between 26° C and 32° C, but the combination of heat and moisture can make conditions feel more oppressive.

Walking or driving inland may become difficult during this period, especially around phosphate-mined areas where tracks can become muddy and unstable. For comfort, pack lightweight clothing, quick-drying shoes, and a reliable waterproof jacket. With lush vegetation returning to the landscape during this time, the island can look especially vibrant − though any outdoor activities should be timed around rainfall patterns.

Dry Season (March to October)

The dry season is generally considered the most comfortable time to visit, offering more stable weather and less rainfall. While temperatures remain high − still in the 26° C to 32° C range − there is often slightly less humidity, and you'll enjoy cooler evenings with light coastal breezes.

This is the best time for outdoor exploration, including coastal walks, snorkelling, and village visits, as the heat is easier to manage and the terrain is more accessible. That said, the sun is still very strong, so high-SPF sunscreen, hats, and hydration remain important. Pack breathable clothing and consider bringing a light long-sleeved layer for sun protection and evening wear.

Travel and Terrain

Travelling through Nauru offers a distinctive experience shaped by the island's compact size, isolated location, and starkly contrasting landscapes. With only 21 square kilometres to navigate, distances are short, but terrain and infrastructure can vary dramatically between coastal areas and the rugged interior. Most of the population lives along a narrow coastal plain, while the central plateau − known locally as "Topside" − is heavily scarred by decades of phosphate mining, leaving it rocky, uneven, and largely uninhabited. Exploring the island involves navigating between these two worlds: the inhabited ring of villages and coastlines, and the mined-out centre, where crumbling coral pinnacles and sharp limestone dominate the landscape.

A single sealed road − about 19 kilometres in total length − encircles the island, making it straightforward to loop between key villages, beaches, and scenic spots. The main coastal road is paved and generally in good condition, though some sections may be potholed or narrow. Street lighting is limited, and signage minimal. Inland roads, particularly those leading to phosphate areas or historical sites, are unpaved, dusty, and often deteriorate quickly during the wet season. If you're venturing beyond the main road, expect uneven gravel tracks, loose stones, and heat-scorched paths. Local drivers are used to weaving around washed-out corners and roaming dogs. Along the way, expect to pass abandoned machinery, dense jungle patches, and bizarre, otherworldly rock formations left by mining activity − it's like travelling through a surreal post-industrial moonscape in parts.

There is no public bus system and few taxis, so visitors usually travel by pre-arranged vehicle with a guide or by hiring a small car. Walking and cycling are also feasible, but heat and humidity can make long distances uncomfortable during the day.

Exploring inland areas − particularly the Topside plateau − presents challenges. Much of this region is rugged, sharp-edged, and uneven, the result of intensive open-cut phosphate mining that has left behind jagged coral pinnacles and dry, exposed ground. Walking here is not recommended without guidance, and 4WD vehicles are often needed to navigate the rougher tracks. The southern and eastern coasts offer easier walking routes, but even these can involve slippery coral rock, particularly near the shoreline. As there are no formal hiking trails, wear closed, sturdy footwear and take care near unfenced drop-offs and abandoned structures.

Suggested Packing items

As you'll be travelling in consistently hot and humid conditions, we recommend packing lightweight, breathable clothing. While temperatures don't vary much throughout the year, sudden downpours and intense sun are common, so be prepared for both. Clothing that dries quickly and offers UV protection is ideal. While merino is popular for travel layering elsewhere, it's less relevant for Nauru's tropical heat − focus instead on cotton, linen, or moisture-wicking fabrics. You won't need heavy jackets or thermals.

Dress is functional, casual, and modest. Locals appreciate travellers covering shoulders and knees away from beaches. A wide-brim hat, sunglasses, and sturdy enclosed footwear are essential. Note that public infrastructure (including roads and footpaths) can be rough or uneven, particularly in former mining areas, so closed-toe shoes are advised even for short walks.

Travel Documents & Money:

☐ Passport (with photocopies)
☐ Travel insurance (with photocopies)
☐ Airline tickets (e-ticket number)
☐ Cash in AUD & your local currency (small denominations for tipping)
☐ Credit Card & ATM Card (See Money Matters section)
☐ Money belt or secure travel pouch

Luggage & Bags:

☐ 1 soft-sided bag (medium size approx. 80–100 litres) – for group tours
☐ Daypack (10–20 litres) – for daily essentials like water, camera, and snacks
☐ Lightweight reusable shopping bag (for markets or day use)

Clothing & Footwear:

☐ Shirts: A mix of short and long-sleeved breathable fabric (cotton/linen)
☐ Pants: Loose-fitting, lightweight trousers (avoid tight jeans for comfort)
☐ Comfortable walking or hiking shoes (sturdy for uneven terrain)
☐ Socks (moisture-wicking recommended)
☐ Wide-brim sun hat or visor
☐ Lightweight scarf or shawl (for religious sites, sun, or dust protection)
☐ Light rain jacket or windbreaker with hood (for sudden downpours)
☐ Light cotton sweater (for evening wear if needed)
☐ Swimsuit & cover-up
☐ Comfortable sandals or flip-flops (for beach and casual wear—not for sightseeing)
☐ Sunglasses

Health & Personal Care:

☐ Prescription medications (enough for the trip)
☐ Sunscreen & lip balm (high SPF — essential year-round)
☐ Insect repellent (mosquitoes are common, especially inland)
☐ Electrolyte tablets or powder (heat and humidity can quickly dehydrate you)
☐ Reusable water bottle with filter (bottled water is essential — tap water is not safe)
☐ Personal first-aid kit (pain relievers, Band-Aids, antihistamines, diarrhoea relief, rehydration salts, etc.)
☐ Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush/comb, shaving items, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, etc.
☐ Hand sanitiser & antibacterial wipes
☐ Pocket-size tissues (many public toilets lack toilet paper)
☐ Wet wipes or facial mist (helpful in the heat)
☐ Dramamine or motion sickness bands (if you're sensitive to small plane flights or bumpy roads inland)

Tech & Gear:

☐ Camera (with spare batteries & SD cards)
☐ Charger for devices & power bank (some areas have unreliable electricity)
☐ Plug adaptors (Type I plug – same as Australia)
☐ Small flashlight or headlamp (power outages are possible, and lighting is minimal outside towns)
☐ Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses

Optional Items

☐ Small notebook & pen
☐ Snacks or energy bars
☐ Small padlocks
☐ Earplugs
☐ Binoculars
☐ Sewing kit & hand wash laundry soap
☐ Travel journal
☐ Hand fan or battery-operated mini fan (heat can be intense and still)

Footwear

You'll be on your feet a lot and may encounter rough, rocky, or slippery surfaces, especially near phosphate areas or on old mining tracks. Enclosed, sturdy walking shoes or light hiking boots with good grip are strongly recommended. Open sandals are suitable for the beach, but not for exploring inland.

Baggage While on Tour

Our baggage policy allows for one piece of luggage up to 20kg per person. We recommend a soft-sided bag, which fits more easily into vehicles and is better suited to the simple transport infrastructure on the island. Note that some accommodation may not have porters or lifts — please ensure you can manage your own luggage independently.

Culture & Etiquette

Nauru's culture is deeply tied to its island geography and Micronesian roots, shaped over generations by migration, colonisation, and mining. Traditionally reliant on fishing and farming, Nauru's community-centred way of life has endured alongside dramatic changes brought by phosphate wealth, colonial administration, and globalisation. You'll see the layers of this journey, from oral storytelling to abandoned mining equipment, woven into everyday life.

Social Interactions

English is widely spoken, but using Nauruan greetings like Tarawong (hello) and Tubwa (thank you) is warmly received. Greet people with a handshake − start with elders − and always use your right hand when giving or receiving anything. Public displays of affection (like hugging or kissing) are uncommon and best avoided. Personal space is valued, and conversation tends to be soft-spoken and respectful.

Religion & Traditions

Christianity plays a central role in Nauruan life, with the Nauru Congregational Church and Roman Catholicism being the most practised denominations. Sundays are especially significant, and it's common to see families attending services dressed in their finest clothing. During religious holidays or commemorations, public life slows down, businesses may close and music may quieten in the evenings.

Traditions are preserved through oral storytelling, song, and dance, particularly during national celebrations like *Angam Day* (26 October), which honours the survival of the Nauruan people. You may be invited to community gatherings or performances.

Dining Customs

Meals are typically simple and shared communally. Expect dishes built around fresh fish, root vegetables, and coconut. When dining with locals, wait until you're invited to eat, and try a bit of everything offered.

Unusual Customs

You may notice that storytelling, rather than written history, plays a key role in Nauruan identity. Stories are often passed down in song or performance, not everything is meant to be questioned or dissected. Sitting quietly and listening is considered good etiquette.

Also, while laughter and humour are part of daily life, sarcasm and direct confrontation are frowned upon. Subtlety and understatement tend to carry more social weight than overt expressions of opinion or critique.

Dressing Respectfully

Modesty is expected throughout the island. Outside beach areas, cover your shoulders and knees, this applies to all genders. In towns and villages, women should avoid strapless tops or short shorts, while men are advised to wear shirts with sleeves. At churches and community events, more formal attire (such as a collared shirt or long skirt) is appreciated.

Swimwear should be kept strictly to the beach, and not worn into towns, markets, or restaurants. Carry a lightweight cover-up when transitioning between the beach and public spaces.

Photography

Photography is generally welcomed, especially at scenic sites and cultural events, but always ask permission before photographing people, particularly elders, children, or private property. Some locals may decline, and that should be respectfully accepted.

Photography is strictly prohibited at border zones and government facilities. Your guide will alert you to any additional restrictions. When in doubt, ask.

Do's & Don'ts

Do:

- Greet elders and hosts with a handshake and warm smile
- Dress modestly, especially in villages or religious settings
- Use your right hand when giving or receiving items
- Accept food and offers graciously, even if just a small bite
- Observe religious customs and be quiet on Sundays

Don't:

- Wear revealing clothing in public
- Show the soles of your feet when sitting (considered rude)
- Enter homes without being invited or without removing shoes
- Publicly criticise local customs, beliefs, or politics
- Display romantic affection in public

Tips while travelling in Nauru

Accommodation

Accommodation in Nauru is limited, with only a handful of options available. Most are found in Aiwo and Yaren. The most established choice is Ewa Lodge, which sits above a supermarket and café. It offers air-conditioned rooms, hot water and daily servicing. While it is considered the most comfortable option on the island, do not expect luxury. Rooms are simple and functional and are accessed via stairs because there is no lift.

Standards can vary significantly. Some lodgings, such as converted container units, are very basic and can come with unexpected quirks like strong chemical smells or limited reception hours.

Electricity supply is generally stable, but backup generators are still used during outages. A torch and power bank are handy in case of blackouts. Rooms usually have firm mattresses and minimal furnishings. Mosquito nets are not consistently provided, so it is worth packing your own repellent.

Bathrooms vary between properties, but most provide hot showers and flushing toilets.

Cuisine

Nauruan cuisine is a blend of traditional Pacific Islander food and international influences. Seafood is a staple, with fresh fish, octopus, and crab commonly featured in meals. Coconut and tropical fruits like bananas and papayas are widely used. A popular traditional dish is "coconut fish," which is fish cooked in coconut milk. Rice and taro are staple starches, often served with meals. Western foods like fried chicken, corned beef, and instant noodles are also popular due to historical and economic influences.

Meals are typically enjoyed communally, and sharing food is an important cultural practice. When dining out, expect a mix of local and international dishes. Restaurants and cafes are limited, so self-catering might be necessary for longer stays. When eating with locals, it’s polite to try all the dishes offered and compliment the host. Fresh water can be scarce, so bottled water is recommended for drinking.

We’ve carefully chosen the restaurants and local food outlets for your group meals and consider these establishments safe to eat at however be very careful with food sold from vendors on the street, and with uncooked fruit and other foods. Fruit that you peel yourself is usually safe - avoid lettuce and other unpeeled produce.

Shops & Souvenirs

Shopping in Nauru is limited, with a few small stores and markets catering primarily to locals. The main shopping areas are in Aiwo and Yaren, where you can find basic necessities, groceries, and household items. For souvenirs, look for locally crafted items such as shell jewellery, woven baskets, and traditional handicrafts that reflect Nauruan culture. Handmade items often incorporate local materials like shells, pandanus leaves, and coconut fibres. Please note if you are flying back into Australia, you will need to declare these items and anything produced from plant materials will likely be confiscated.

Prices can be higher due to the island’s remote location and the cost of imported goods. Shops typically open from Monday to Saturday, with limited hours on Sundays. When purchasing souvenirs, engaging with local artisans not only supports the community but also provides an opportunity to learn more about Nauruan traditions and craftsmanship.

Recommending Reading & Viewing

Blog Posts

- 12 Things You Didn't Know About Nauru
- Staying Safe on Your Adventure in Nauru – What Not To Do
- Nauru – Pleasant Island
- Nauru's War History: Uncovering WWII Wrecks and Relics

Reading

- **Paradise for Sale: A Parable of Nature** by Carl N. McDaniel and John M. Gowdy
  A short but powerful read that explores Nauru's phosphate boom, environmental collapse and the consequences of rapid wealth. It's clear, thought-provoking and gives a strong foundation for understanding what you'll see on the island.

Viewing

- **Chasing Asylum (2016)**
  An Australian documentary exploring offshore detention policies, including scenes filmed covertly on Nauru. Controversial and confronting, but essential for understanding one of the island's most politically sensitive roles in recent decades.

Final Word

At Crooked Compass, we believe in taking you beyond the ordinary, uncovering the stories, landscapes, and traditions that many travellers miss.

We'd love to hear about your experience! If you enjoyed your journey, please consider leaving a Google review to help fellow travellers discover what makes Nauru and Crooked Compass special. You can share your thoughts here:
👉 Review us here

We also encourage you to share your photos and stories with us on social media so we can follow along on your adventure!

Facebook: @Crookedcompasstravel #FollowADifferentPath #crookedcompass
X: @CrookedCompass #FollowADifferentPath #crookedcompass
Instagram: @crooked_compass #FollowADifferentPath #crookedcompass

Emergency Contact Procedure Reminder and Information

Ensuring the safety and well-being of our guests is of paramount importance to us at Crooked Compass. We would like to take this opportunity to remind you about our emergency contact procedure and where to find your contact details, as well as provide guidance on what to do in different emergency situations.

Local Crooked Compass 24/7 Assistance Contact can be found on your detailed itinerary. This is the **first point** of contact for any concerns or queries whilst in destination for all types of assistance.

Emergency Services Page 6 in this document.

Notify Crooked Compass (Non-Urgent)
For any non-urgent enquiries, please contact our office within Australian office hours (Mon – Fri, 9am – 5.30pm AEST) on +61 2 8089 1370 or via email info@crooked-compass.com

Consular Assistance Please familiarize yourself with your local embassy's details before travel.