

# COOK ISLANDS BOWLS CARNIVAL TOUR



## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. How do I get to the Cook Islands?

Uplift Tours and Travel chooses to partner with Air New Zealand, utilising the “Works” fare, which includes all meals and drinks (non alcoholic and alcoholic. Your E-Ticket is included in your travel documents.

### 2. What is my baggage allowance?

Air New Zealand allows you to travel with 1 checked bag up to 23 kgs and 1 piece of carry-on baggage weighing no more than 7kg. Bowls must go into checked in baggage.

**2.a If taking liquids, aerosols and gels** (including lipsticks) in your carry-on baggage, they must be in bottles no larger than 100ml carried in a resealable plastic bag.

**2.b Spare batteries must be in your carry on baggage** (spare batteries are NOT allowed in your checked in luggage).

### 3. What is the format of the Bowls Carnival?

The Cook Islands Bowls Carnival is a fun, Open Fours competition played over two half days. Individual registrations are accepted for friendly composite teams. Each bowler only requires 2 bowls for both the Social Rollup and Carnival.

### 4. Do I take my own bowls?

Yes, you will need to take your own bowls. It is suggested that you take an old set of bowls to play with as the greens are not generally up to Australian Competition standards. These will be counted as part of your checked 23kg baggage with Air New Zealand and will travel in the cargo hold of the aircraft.

### 5. Do I need a visa?

Stays in the Cook Islands of up to 31 days require a passport valid for at least six months past the contemplated departure date and a return or onward ticket. Any person who enters the Cook Islands solely for recreation or holiday does not require an entry permit (or visa), provided he/she possesses proof of onward passage (booked and paid) for stays of not more than 31 days.

### 6. What currency do I need to take?

The Cook Islands unit of currency is the New Zealand dollar (NZD). Coins have values of 10, 20 and 50 cents, \$1 and \$2; notes have values of \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100. There is some local Cook Islands money in circulation, identical in value to NZ dollars. The only Cook Islands note is the \$3 note. Local Cook Islands coins and notes cannot be exchanged outside the Cook Islands so spend it or make sure you get it exchanged before leaving the islands. Banking is fairly limited in the Cook Islands, with the ANZ in Avarua for international travellers. There is also Bank of South Pacific. ANZ ATMs can be found on the main island of Rarotonga in the capital city Avarua. There are no ATM facilities on any of the other islands. Eftpos is available at some hotels and stores. Western Union has an office in Avarua offering money exchange and transfers. ANZ ATMs are linked to the international Cirrus/Maestro systems so most travellers can access their home bank accounts.

### 7. Where am I staying?

The Edgewater Resort & Spa. This is the best-known Cook Islands resort, offering affordable luxury on the sheltered west coast of Rarotonga. The Edgewater’s prime location puts Rarotonga’s natural splendour front and centre; the magnificent sunsets, the surrounding lush green mountains and the view over the white sandy beach and deep blue lagoon. Yet it’s not just the backdrop that makes The Edgewater Resort & Spa so perfect. What sets this premier Rarotonga resort apart is its great staff, great dining, first-class entertainment, health spa and sparkling pool. As the largest resort on Rarotonga, Edgewater has more space, more activities and has been tried and tested by Uplift Tours and Travel staff and clients. The room type included in your package is a Garden Room (upgrades are available at extra cost).

### 8. What is the weather like?

The Cook Islands enjoy the weather and climate of a tropical oceanic region. There are no extremes in temperatures, the drier cooler season runs from April to November when temperatures stay in the mid-20Cs. The warmer humid season starts in December and runs through to March with the average temperature being around 28C. There is little variation in the temperature throughout the year and between islands, humidity is high and rain quite frequent. Usually rainfall will occur in the late afternoon and evening, with sunny weather at other times. The daily range of temperature is minimal, being only about 5C.

### 9. What language is spoken?

The official languages are English and Cook Islands Maori.

### 10. How do I get around?

Some transportation is included as part of your package (see itinerary & inclusions). For times you are on your own and wanting to explore, the Town Bus operates regular services right around Rarotonga from Monday to Saturday and calls into your resort. Bus drivers are happy to stop and pick you up anywhere along the way. Rental vehicles are also available (vehicles drive on the left). Drivers of all vehicles must have a current full driving license in their home country and be able to present it to the rental

company. You will only be able to rent the vehicle class shown on your driving license. If choosing to rent a car be careful of dogs on the road, and avoid driving at night.

### **11. What & where should I eat & drink?**

Daily continental breakfast at your hotel is included in your package along with some morning & afternoon teas and dinners (see itinerary & inclusions). For the times that meals are at your own expense, you should indulge in the abundance of local produce which includes a wide variety of citrus and tropical fruits, island chestnuts and garden vegetables. Seafood features on many restaurant menus and so does coconut as the coconut palms produce a supply of fruit all year round. Local meat and poultry are available. Umukai, the national speciality, is a traditional Polynesian feast which involves baking food in an underground oven, and is usually accompanied with traditional entertainment by local people. Some restaurants/cafes we can recommend are Spaghetti House at your hotel Edgewater Resort and Spa, Kikau Hut, Café Salsa and Windjammer.

### **12. What should I wear?**

Think cotton, think casual (shorts, short-sleeved shirts). Dress should be light and casual, but not too brief in public places. Sunbaking around the resort pool or on a beach is fine, but bathers shouldn't be worn outside the resort. A sarong/sulu/paraueu is a useful accessory for covering up over a swimming costume. Again, tropical clothes are fine for evening wear - ties are rare, even for people going to court or funerals! In the cooler months a long-sleeved shirt or jacket may come in handy. A pair of reef shoes will come in handy.

When we visit the Titikaveka village church on Sunday, men should wear long sleeves and cover their knees, and ladies should cover their shoulders and knees (the locals also wear dress hats). Don't forget though you will need your fun **"Island Attire"** for the Social Rollup. Dress attire for the Bowls Carnival will be your **Uplift Tours and Travel Polo Shirt** for Day 1 (group photo opportunity!) and **Club Colours** for Day 2.

### **13. Is the Cook Islands a safe destination?**

The Cook Islands is a safe and relaxing place to visit, with only a few hazards for the visitor to be aware of. The good news is there are no wild animals, snakes or poisonous spiders. There is a relatively low incidence of crime in the Cook Islands. The most common crime against tourists is theft of items such as cash, jewellery, cameras and mobile phones. Driving in the Cook Islands can be dangerous, particularly at night, due to poor visibility and road conditions.

### **14. What health risks are there?**

Rarotonga and several of the other Cook Islands have a serious problem with ciguatera, a form of fish poisoning that affects reef fish. Symptoms of poisoning in humans who have eaten infected fish include stomach upsets, itching, faintness and a slow pulse. Local restaurants usually don't offer reef fish, so it's only a concern if you are catching your own reef fish. It's recommended that all travellers be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio, regardless of their destination. Uplift Tours and Travel recommends you consult your own GP or The Travel Doctor website, [www.traveldoctor.com.au](http://www.traveldoctor.com.au).

Medical and dental services in the Cook Islands are available but limited, particularly in the outer islands. There is a hospital in Rarotonga. Most doctors and hospitals will expect payment in advance and often in cash only. Serious medical problems will require air evacuation, e.g. to Auckland in New Zealand. Make sure your travel insurance covers you for evacuation. While the Cook Islands have excellent scuba diving conditions don't get carried away and forget time and depth as there are no decompression chambers on any of the islands. Mosquitoes can be annoying in the Cook Islands, particularly during the rainy season from around mid-December to mid-April. Outbreaks of the mosquito-borne illness dengue fever occur from time to time so mosquito repellent is essential. While the drinking water in Avarua (Rarotonga) and other large towns is safe, to avoid traveller's diarrhoea, only drink bottled water or boil the water before use. Uplift Tours and Travel provides you with 1 courtesy bottle of water daily as part of your package.

### **15. Can I arrange extra tours?**

You can book additional tours at the tour booking office opposite reception.

### **16. Can I leave a Donation or Gift for the local bowlers?**

We have found it is generally customary for the local bowlers to give our tour participants a small gift. Should you wish to reciprocate we suggest something small with Australian flair. The opportunity for locals to play Lawn Bowls is not always possible due to a lack of resources. Should you wish to donate your old bowls to the Rarotonga Bowls Club this would be a very generous and appreciated gesture.

### **17. Do I really need Travel Insurance?**

If you fall ill or become injured whilst overseas it can cost a fortune. For example, did you know that a hospital stay in South East Asia could set you back \$800 a day? Or that a medical evacuation from the US could cost as much as \$300,000? If you have a medical emergency while you're travelling, you are responsible for the financial cost - not Medicare or the Department of Foreign Affairs. That's why Uplift Tours and Travel offers Insurance policies including access to an emergency assistance team who are available 24/7. They can make sure you get the appropriate treatment, pay the bills upfront so you're not out of pocket, and bring you home or help you change your travel plans if necessary. Then there are the all-too-frequent travel disruptions due to airline mishaps, or even natural disasters. Every day around the world, bags are lost, passports or wallets are stolen, phones or laptops are damaged, and planes, trains or boats are missed due to unforeseen delays. Travelling can be an amazing experience, but should the unexpected occur you'll be glad you took out an Insurance policy. And best of all, travel insurance is so easy to arrange. You should consider your own needs and the PDS before making a decision to buy the product.

Please ensure you have obtained adequate travel insurance and provided your policy details to Uplift Tours and Travel should you choose an alternative travel insurance provider.