



Photos: Vai Masunu at Vzuaa Photography.

Representing 685

Family, Faith,
Sport, Legacy—Fa'a Samoa

While the allure may seem to lie in the prestige of representing Samoa at national and international levels as rugby team TOA SAMOA (translated as 'to serve with love') and FETU SAMOA (translated as 'Samoa Stars'), the true essence is found in the journey—the tireless training, the lifelong friendships, the community involvement, and the life lessons instilled along the way. The heart of this effort lies in players' relationships with family, local community clubs, churches, and the disciplined dedication that enriches their families and communities.





ALL THINGS PASIFIKA BRISBANE

TALOFA LAVA

Special Tribute

The
Samoa
Edit

Image: © Adhis Cole Photography.

Instagram icon @adhiscolephotography



Piula Cave Pool on the island of Savai'i.
Photo: Samoa Brandkit.

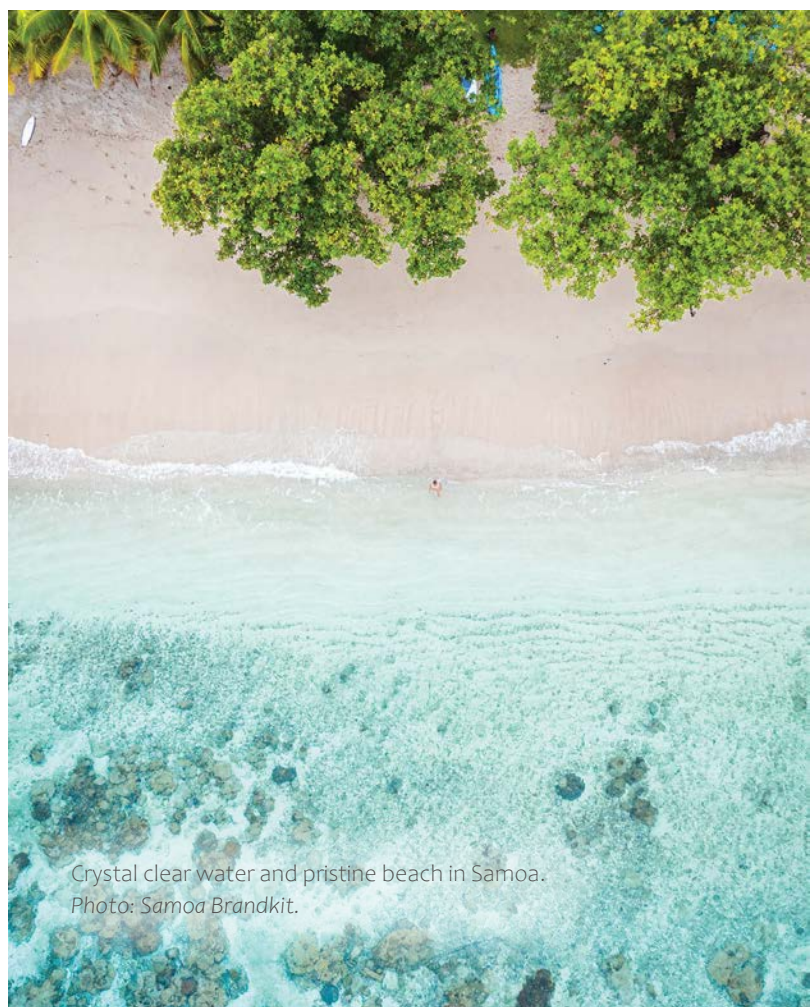
Samoa

in pictures

A Visualscape
Through a
Vibrant Culture



Upolu.
Photo: Samoa Brandkit.



Crystal clear water and pristine beach in Samoa.
Photo: Samoa Brandkit.

The Mark of Mana:

Tatau & Malu

– A Mark of Respect

Across the vast Moana, the art of *tatau* stands as a legendary testament to Polynesian culture. These intricate markings, deeply rooted in Samoan tradition, have played a crucial role in preserving and propagating cultural identity. Like Japan's *irezumi*, Samoa's *tatau* is one of the most distinct and enduring tattoo traditions in the world. This indigenous art form, with a continuous history stretching back over 2,000 years, remains a mark of personal and spiritual maturity—an embodiment of one's commitment to *fa'a Samoa* (the Samoan way)

DESPITE global tattoo trends and changes in modern society, the ancient method of *tatau* endures.

Using a sharpened tooth dipped in ink and forcefully yet expertly tapped into the skin, the painstaking process is much the same today as it was centuries ago. *Tufuga tā tatau*, or master tattooists, like Brisbane-based Li'aifaiva Imo Levi, continue this sacred practice with great reverence.

Samoa is often regarded as the ancestral home of tattooing, with many believing that the modern word 'tattoo' originates from the Samoan word '*tatau*'. While some Pacific islands, including Tonga, banned traditional tattooing in the 19th century due to health concerns, Samoa remained steadfast, preserving this rich cultural heritage.

The *tatau* is more than just body art; it's a rite of passage, particularly for young men, representing their readiness to embrace their cultural identity. The *pe'a*, the traditional *tatau* for men, spans from the waist to the knees and is a physically and mentally demanding process, a symbol of endurance, strength, and respect. It serves as an affirmation of identity and community ties, a tradition passed down through generations, adapting in new ways but always anchored in its cultural roots.

For women, the *tatau* carries equally profound significance. The *malu*, the traditional Samoan tattoo for women, reflects grace, service, and dignity. Increasingly, these ancient symbols

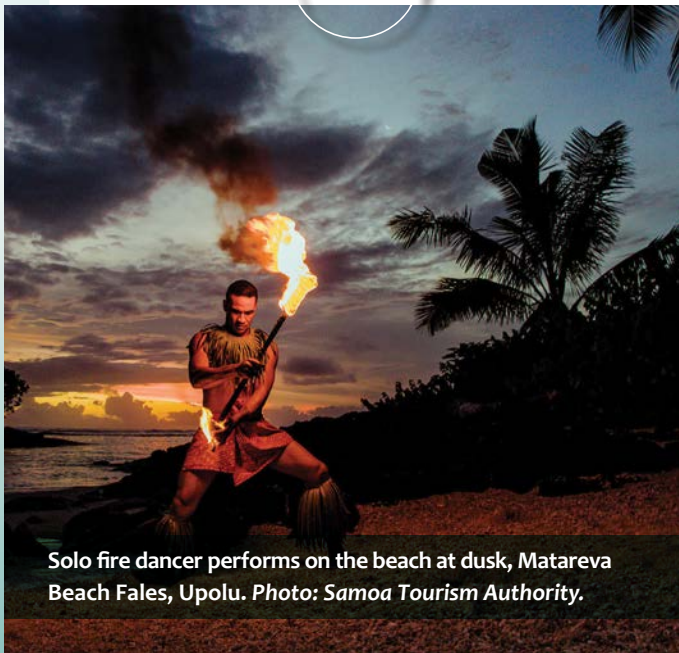


(the *moko kauae*, the Fijian *veiqia*, the Papuan *tep tok* and the Samoan *malu*) – made to celebrate the significance of the female – are being reclaimed by women in the diaspora, with many recognizing the importance of preserving their heritage.

Even political figures have embraced this cultural practice. Last year, New Zealand's Deputy Prime Minister, Carmel Sepuloni, proudly received her *malu*, a six-hour process that was overseen by renowned Li'aifaiva, Imo Levi. Reflecting on her experience, Sepuloni noted the empowerment that came from wearing her sacred markings. She acknowledged that while her daily life may differ greatly from that of her ancestors, the core principles—*family, culture, service, love, humility, and courage*—remain unchanged.

Tattoo masters like Li'aifaiva continue to carry on the legacy of *tatau*, honouring the artistry and the spiritual journey it represents. A former civil engineering student, Li'aifaiva chose to forgo his studies to dedicate his life to this ancient craft. Today, he works as a traditional tattooist in Brisbane, where he not only

The beautiful ways of Samoa



Solo fire dancer performs on the beach at dusk, Matareva Beach Fa'les, Upolu. Photo: Samoa Tourism Authority.



Locals at Toonai-Levasa Resort. Photo: Samoa Image Library.

Enduring Traditions

Samoaan culture is not merely a collection of customs and practices; it is a living heritage that embodies *fā'a Samoa*—the Samoan way of life. Rooted in core values such as family, respect, community, and service, *fā'a Samoa* shapes the resilience and unity of Samoan identity. Preserving language, dance, music, and storytelling has allowed Samoan culture to thrive in the face of modern challenges, serving as a bridge to the global diaspora. Cultural organizations like the Miss Samoa and Miss South Pacific platforms, King Siva Academy, Matavai Pacific Cultural Arts, Mana Academy (Salt Lake City), school programs like the Oceania and Queensland Schools Multicultural Showcase, Waves Forward, Pacific Kids Learning, among many other local community cultural associations, churches, and sporting organisations have been instrumental in passing on these traditions, fostering a strong connection to Samoan heritage across generations and the globe over.

The Heart of Samoan Culture: Fa'a Samoa

At the core of Samoan identity is *fā'a Samoa*, which emphasizes family (*aiga*), respect (*fā'aaloalo*), and community. The extended family structure centralizes contributions to the well-being of the group, and this collective mindset extends outward to serve the broader community. Respect for elders and chiefs, expressed through oratory and traditional ceremonies, is fundamental. Matavai Cultural Arts, is one such organisation which exemplifies these values, instilling them in future generations and reinforcing the importance of community service and respect in Samoan life. ➡



Label: TEMESIA.CO
Photo: Fiji Fashion Week, supplied.



Label: DUENDE.
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Fiji Fashion Week expands horizons



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Jollof rice.

Photo: Dana L. Brown,
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CHRISTMAS FEAST

Dishes to tantalise your tastebuds, from the Motherland

It is often said that we eat first with our eyes before our mouth, and nothing compares to the visual and sensory delight of a Christmas feast inspired by the rich culinary traditions of Africa.

For African Australians longing for the tastes of home during the holiday season, bringing the flavours of the Motherland to your Christmas table can make the holidays feel truly special. Here are a few 'must-have' dishes to evoke that festive spirit and celebrate the joy of Christmas with familiar and comforting flavours.



After the hero 'Jollof Rice', the fried rice becomes the next rice dish perfect for the Christmas table.

Photo: African fried rice with fried fish, and shitor.
Credit: Courage Agamah from Pixabay.



Photo: Pexels | Adrienne Anderson,
Deep-etch by Deirdre Lynch, LCM.

Photo: Pexels.

LVN Colour's 2024 HOLIDAY Gift Guide

Your ultimate guide to ethically chic, culture-inspired Christmas gifts —thoughtfully curated to send the perfect message, “I see you.” Sustainable and stylish, these picks are crafted to celebrate everyone in your circle.



Photo: Pexels | shkrbhaanthony.

QACC & UQ Partnership Project

Photos: Official photographer, Adhis Cole Photography, with Masimba Sasa Photography.

On Friday 4 October, the QACC/AYSC in partnership with UQ, officially launched the report into structural/systemic racism and the partnership on human origins and revolution with the University of Queensland. QACC president Beny Bol OAM stated that together, and with resolve and unshakeable determination, sincere intentions and humility, a huge difference in shaping a truly fairer, inclusive, just and authentically empowering society is possible. With an impressive line up of participants from heads of judiciary, all sides of politics, partner organisations and individuals, community leaders and members and the QACC and AYSC team members. Acknowledging the powerful and impactful speech given by the Australian Race Commissioner, Girdharan Sivaraman, the presence of the Assistant Commissioner of the Queensland Corrective Services, Joel Smith, thanked all for “always standing with us” and for coming to the African Village for this momentous occasion.



Robert Mukombozi and Sohair Elgagir with some community elders.



QCS Assistant Commissioner Joel Smith with QACC president Beny Bol OAM.



Centre: Cultural performer and AYSC mentor Samoko Okoth.



Denis Jato, researcher and AYSC mentor, and Amandhi Caldera, MC.



Anthony Kamau, Peter Garange, Beny Bol, Girdharan Sivaraman, Sanesie Dukuly, Victor Kollie and Alan Chen.

From left, top row: Hon. Mark Bailey MP; Beny Bol OAM; Deputy Chief Magistrate Judge Anthony Gett. **Centre row:** Acting Chief Judge Paul Smith AM; former Speaker Mark Bailey; MP Barnie Van Wyk, QACC. **Bottom row:** Prof. Michael Westaway, UQ archaeologist and biological anthropologist, major convenor for archaeology and archaeological science research integrity officer (HASS); Girdharan Sivaraman, Australian Race Commissioner; Chief Magistrate Judge Janelle Brassington.