

JAN. - FEB. - MAR. - 2023

FREE EDITION

ISSUE | n°6

# NAWIMBA

*Your Tourism Guide*

## Calendar of events

Immerse yourself into the Vanuatu moments

## Discover the legends of Vanuatu

Six tales from our beautiful island

## Going off-grid in Torba Province

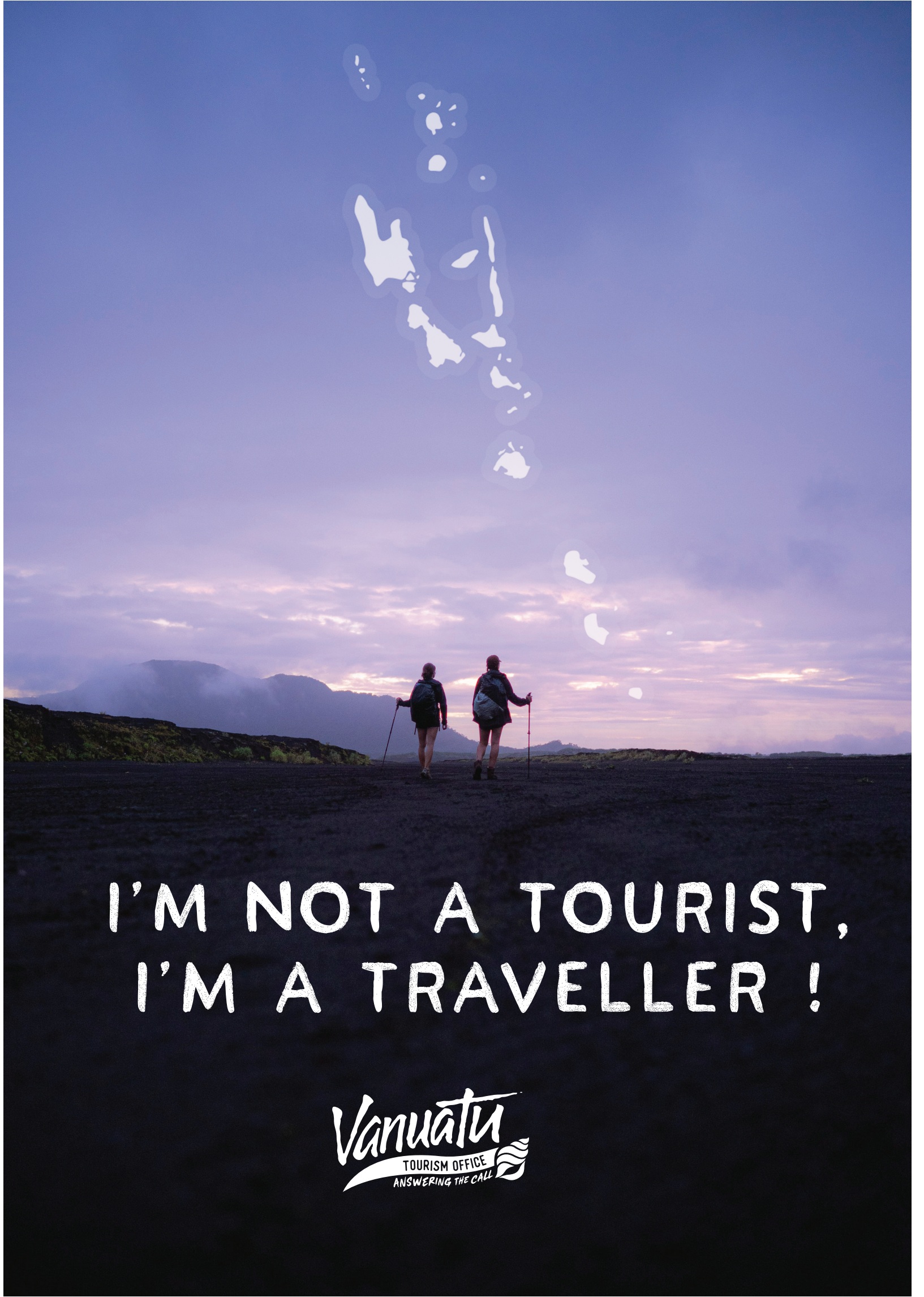
What to do in the different islands

#SAPOTEM  
LOKOL  
TURISIM

[www.vanuatu.travel](http://www.vanuatu.travel)

**Vanuatu**  
TOURISM OFFICE  
ANSWERING THE CALL 





I'M NOT A TOURIST,  
I'M A TRAVELLER !

*Vanuatu*  
TOURISM OFFICE  
ANSWERING THE CALL



# Editorial

Vanuatu is a tropical paradise with a wide variety of activities and experiences to offer. Whether you are looking for an adventure-filled holiday, a relaxing beach getaway, or an opportunity to immerse yourself in the local culture, Vanuatu has something for everyone. With its lush landscapes, crystal-clear waters, and vibrant local communities, Vanuatu is the perfect destination for those seeking an escape from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

So why wait? Start planning your next holiday in Vanuatu today and experience all that this amazing country has to offer. With the help of the new edition of Nawimba magazine from the Vanuatu Tourism Office, you will be able to plan your journey and make the most of your time in this beautiful destination.

In this edition, we gathered for you inspiring legends of Vanuatu. Be ready for a trip to mystery throughout the 6 provinces. Unveil the magic with Nawimba !!!

## Table of Contents



3. Calendar of events
4. Explore the culture
7. The "Namarae"
8. The Magic Feathers
10. The opening of the sea
12. What if...
14. The namele's child
15. The majestic Namele Tree of Vanuatu
17. Go off-grid in the Banks
18. Sympathy for a devil
19. Most famous cultural tours in Banks islands
18. Artist's Corner: Meet Jahs', the illustrationist of this edition.

**Editor-In-Chief:** Paul Pio, **Editor:** Vanina Galloni-Weber, **Graphic Designer:** Christopher Malili, **Illustration Artist:** Robert (Island Graff) **Photographers:** The Islander, Niki Kuautonga, Jean-Pierre Niptik **Contributors:** Jaimeen Keni, Lea Faccarello, Kersom Richard, Alexina Delaplane.

The tales are a free transcription of Nabanga and stories gathered in the communities. The book is an illustrated anthology of the oral traditions of Vanuatu. The stories were collected by Paul Gardissat. It is an oral Arts project form the Vanuatu Cultural Centre.









# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## MARCH

5th - Customs Chief's Day

# 2023

### Land Diving Naghol at (Pentecost)

29th April - Point Cross Village (South Pentecost)

13th May - Point Cross Village (South Pentecost)

10th June - Point Cross Village (South Pentecost)



To book, visit VTO's Port Vila Visitor Information Centre,  
call 22 813 / 5146771 or email [info@vanuatu.travel](mailto:info@vanuatu.travel)





# EXPLORE THE CULTURE

**Connect with local communities, explore hidden marvels and immerse yourself in the local culture. Elevate your travel experience beyond a mere tourist by becoming a true traveler.**

---

Embarking on a tour in Vanuatu offers a rich and unparalleled immersion into the local culture, showcasing the island nation's stunning landscapes and hidden delights. By embracing this method of discovery, visitors have the opportunity to forge bonds with the diverse communities and gain a deeper understanding of their distinct cultures and traditions.

A true travel experience is not merely a matter of ticking off popular tourist destinations. Rather, it entails engaging with the locals, residing among them

and gaining insights into their way of life. Through taking tours in Vanuatu, one can fulfill this essential aspect of travel and learn about the people and their customs in a meaningful way.

The legends and myths of Vanuatu offer an intriguing window into the culture and history of the islands, and engaging with these stories from the perspectives of the local residents can provide a truly enriching experience.

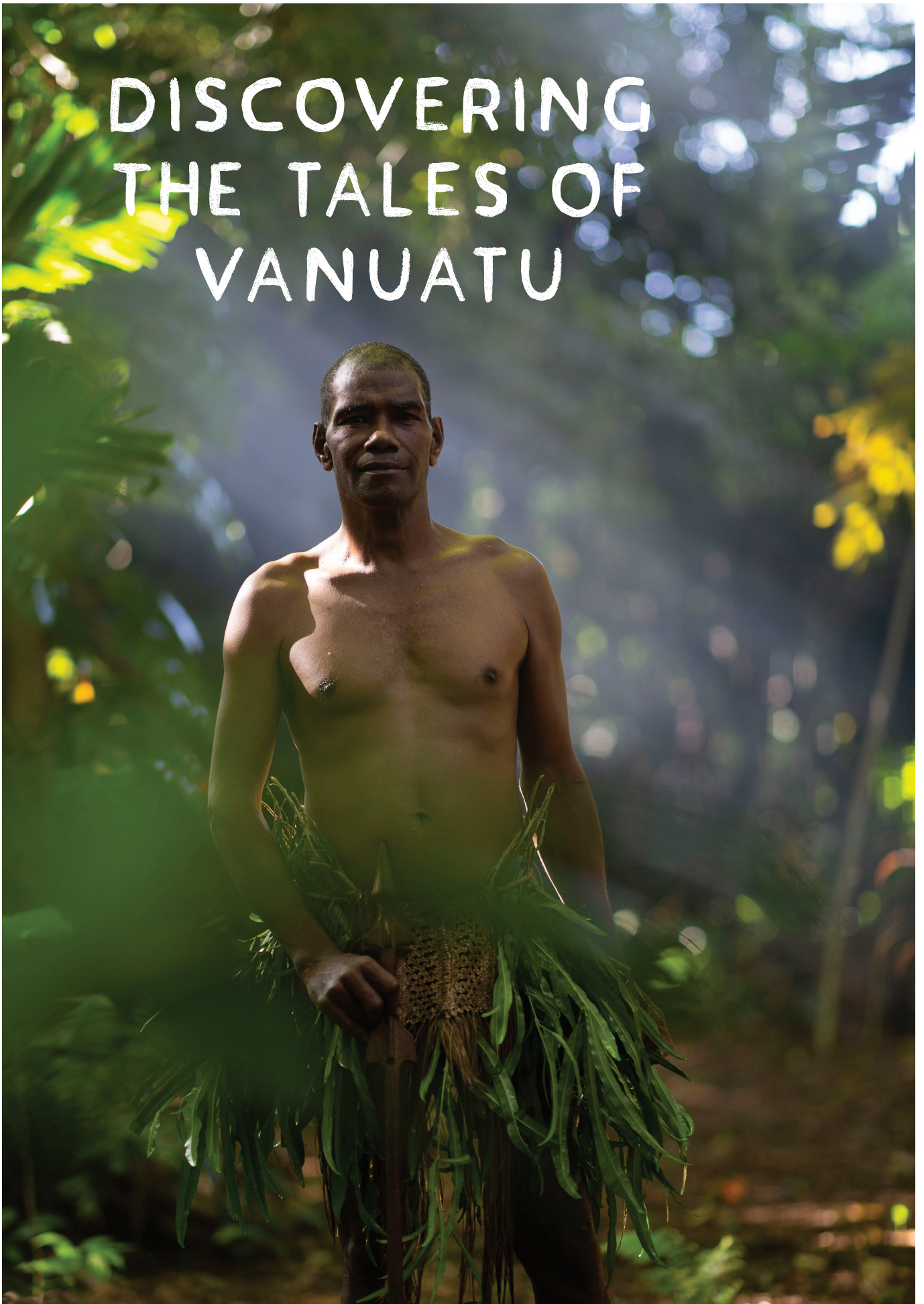
For those seeking to elevate their travel experience beyond

that of a mere tourist, exploring Vanuatu through tours is the answer. Sign up for a unique opportunity to connect with the local communities, discover the hidden marvels of the archipelago, and become a true traveler. So why wait? Let your journey of discovery in Vanuatu commence.





# DISCOVERING THE TALES OF VANUATU





## SANMA PROVINCE



When you think 'mountaineering', you don't usually think Vanuatu. But the archipelago is home to one of the highest peaks in the Pacific, the mighty Mount Tabwemasana, which rises from the surrounding cloud forest and supplies most of the fresh water on Santo. Not many people actually summit Mount Tabwemasana (around 6 per year), but it can be done. Just make sure you arrive in the dry season (May to October), when the river crossings are possible. Be warned, it is a tough journey that takes around 10 hours hard trekking to basecamp at Kerepua village, then another 4 hours to the summit. You can organise guided tours through local Santo operator, Wrecks To Rainforest.



# THE “NAMARAE”



In the Island of Santo, a small spring flowed from a rocky outcropping at the base of the majestic Tabwemasana mountain.



the killing of the eel told his wife and sons it was time for them to leave the village and go to a safe distance away. Heartbroken and still angry, they all left the village and headed towards Tabwemasana.

As the villagers layed down for a digestive nap, they suddenly realized that something was wrong. Their legs felt heavy and seemed to be merging into a single appendage. Their bodies were slowly but surely transforming into eels. As they writhed in pain on the ground, a loud noise filled the air, and a massive flood appeared, coming from the shore and that rapidly came sweeping the village and all of its inhabitants away in a tumble.

The man and his family could not believe what they were witnessing. They hugged each other relieved to be alive and safe.

From then on, everyone in the island knew it was forbidden to fish for the giant eels

The story reminds us that nature should be protected and respected, and that there is always a consequence to unthought exploitation of what is rare. The story also suggests that nature has its own ways of responding to harm or disrespect, and it can come in very violent ways for human beings.

One day, a man from the village nearby discovered that what he had thought was a rock was actually the back of a giant namara (eel), peacefully asleep. He informed the other villagers of his discovery. Despite his protest, they immediately began planning to kill and eat the giant animal to prepare a feast.

He pleaded for the eel's life to be spared but the villagers would not listen and went ahead with their plans. They started preparing a traditional Vanuatan dish called lap lap.

They killed the defentless animal, chopped it in pieces and prepared the oven. However, no matter how they tried, the lap lap would not cook properly. After several attempts, the villagers were finally able to taste it and found it delicious.

As they were all gathered and enjoying the feast, the man who had discovered the eels and was opposed





# THE MAGIC FEATHERS



After a long day of working in his garden, MajickJicky decided to take a swim at the sea. As he walked towards the shore, he heard muffled laughter and saw five fairies preparing to bathe in the water. To his surprise, they removed their long, silky wings before diving into the ocean. Captivated by their grace, MajickJicky crawled closer to the shore and stole one of the pairs of wings before hiding again.

## A legend from Futuna Island

As the sun began to set, the fairies returned to the shore and noticed that one pair of wings was missing. The most beautiful fairy began to cry as they searched for the missing wings, but they could not find them. As the sun set, the fairies realized they had to fly back home and leave their sister behind.

As the moon rose high in the sky, the fairy was still crying and trembling on the sandy shore. Majickjicky approached her and offered to bring her back to his village and take care of her. She accepted and eventually married him in a simple but beautiful ceremony.

Years later, as Majickjicky was out fishing, the fairy found her wings hidden under the bed. Saddened and angry at being deceived by the man she loved, she decided to leave him. As she walked away, Majickjicky begged for her to stay, but she would not listen. In desperation, he grabbed a knife and stabbed her wings. As the feathers fell to the ground, the fairy's body turned to stone and became too heavy for Majickjicky to lift.

Ever since, every night, it is said that you can hear Majickjicky crying and repenting, hoping for the fairy to return. After a long day of working in his garden, MajickJicky decided to take a swim at the sea. As he walked towards the shore, he heard muffled laughter and saw five fairies preparing to bathe

in the water. To his surprise, they removed their long, silky wings before diving into the ocean. Captivated by their grace, MajickJicky crawled closer to the shore and stole one of the pairs of wings before hiding again.





SANIMA PROVINCE



# THE OPENING



## SHEFA PROVINCE

The wise Roi Mata was not young anymore. He had brought peace and prosperity to the people of Lelepa and was hoping to pacify the other islands around Efate as well.

He felt in his heart he needed to put an end to the terrible and constant wars raging between the tribes. He had a plan and decided to organize a great feast. He invited all the neighboring chiefs to come in peace and to bring simple offerings. "Bring what you harvested the most this season," he said.

Curious and wanting to show their courage, all the chiefs came, even those from far away. They came accompanied by their most accomplished warriors. In their canoes, some brought coconuts, others taro, and so on. As Roi Mata greeted his guests, he invited them to gather accordingly to what they had brought. "Coconuts with coconuts, taro with taro, and so on," he said.

"If you want peace," Roi Mata declared, "from now on consider allying accordingly to the groups made today. You now belong to a clan; your totem is what you have brought me. Ensure to marry outside your clan and offer generous gifts to all newlyweds and you will live in peace and harmony forever."

All the chiefs and warriors realized that this gathering and the wise instructions of Roi Mata were a unique opportunity to start a new era. To show their acceptance, they all respectfully deposited their weapons at the feet of Roi Mata.

Roi Mata became a legend and is still today considered the greatest king of Vanuatu.

It is said that when he passed away, so many people from all the islands wanted to pay their respects and thank him for his spiritual legacy. Thousands left their islands to honor him. No more canoes were available and many thought they would not be able to make it to the ceremony. However, something magical happened that day: the sea parted in two, allowing communities to safely walk back and forth to the Hat Islands to attend Roi Mata's funeral.

The sea's miraculous parting was seen as a testament to the impact Roi Mata had had on the people and the importance of his message of peace. To this day, his memory is revered and his teachings remembered, helping to maintain the harmony and unity that he worked so hard to establish.



# ROI MATA



# OF THE SEA!



**SHEFA PROVINCE**

## How to get there

In July 2008, Chef Roi Mata's domain was formally registered a world heritage site - the first in Vanuat! Just half an hour's drive North of Port Vila and featuring a string of perfect beaches, a breathtaking harbour, spectacular views of the Hat shaped island of Artok and so much more.

In a culture where language is unwritten, oral traditions are faithfully passed down from generation to generation. The accuracy of such history is frequently disputed by Western cultures, for what is heard can be changed in the retelling. And in any case, how does one separate fact from legend? Throughout the middle and southern islands of Vanuatu there existed the story of a great and powerful man.

MATA



# WHAT IF...

## A legend from Ambae Island

The elderly women in Ambangga village had a secret way to regain their youth. They would walk to a well-known creek and dive into the water, passing through a narrow rock passage. The rough edges of the rock would scrape their skin, causing their wrinkles to smooth away like a molting snake. Once they emerged from the passage, they would be rejuvenated.

One day, a grandmother decided it was time for her to reverse the effects of time and went to the creek. She took a deep breath and dived into the water, feeling the magic happen as she passed through the rock passage. When she emerged, she saw that she had been transformed into a young woman.

As she walked back to the village, the grandmother's legs felt strong and sure. But when she entered her home, her granddaughter did not recognize her and tried to run away. The grandmother tried to explain who she was, but the girl accused her of being a wicked spirit.

The grandmother's heart was crushed. She loved her granddaughter more than anything and couldn't bear to be rejected by her. So, she went back

to the creek and reversed the transformation, returning to her original appearance.

From that day on, the creek lost its magic and no one was able to regain their youth. Many in Ambangga village regret that the grandmother had gone back to the creek and that eternal youth was not possible.

The moral of this story suggests that the pursuit of youth and eternal life may not bring the

happiness and fulfillment that we expect it to. The joy of cherishing grand children is one of the highest reward of life.







## Accommodation and tour information

Santo Travel Call center will be able to organize your accommodation, tours and activities during your stay on the island. Call + 678 36616 and + 678 7104029 / 5448999. Email: [reservations@santo.travel](mailto:reservations@santo.travel)

**Bethany Guesthouse.** Located in the central location of Saratamata, east of Ambae, and is a short walk to the local shops, market place, province headquarters and beach. Offering 4 rooms and can accommodate up to 13 people.

**Tui Guesthouse .** Located in the central location of Saratamata and is a short walk to the local shops, market place, province headquarters and beach. Located on east Ambae offering 6 rooms and can accommodate up to 8 people.

**Toa Palms Guesthouse .** Set amongst the palm gardens. The guesthouse has solar lighting, basic and neat. Located on west Ambae offering 3 rooms and can accommodate up to 9 people.

**Tua Guesthouse.** A new island bungalow built according to Vanuatu Tourism Minimum standard requirements with flash toilets, Solar power and other basic facilities. Located on west Ambae offering 4 rooms and can accommodate up to 10 people.

**Charlington Guesthouse.** Located in NduiNdui West Ambae offering 4 rooms and can accommodate up to 5 people.

**Voui Volcanic Bungalow.** A neat and basic island style bungalow accommodation. Located on west Ambae offering 3 rooms and can accommodate up to 4 people. Activities - Snorkelling, Surfing

**Devils Rock Visit** this special site in West Ambae and learn about its cultural significance. Inclusive of refreshment. Half day - 2500vt p.p

**Manaro Volcano Hike.** Hike through the jungle to see the spectacular lakes found inside the active volcano. Camp at the volcanic crater for night, Cultural performances, local feasting, kava ceremony on return. 4 days 16000vt

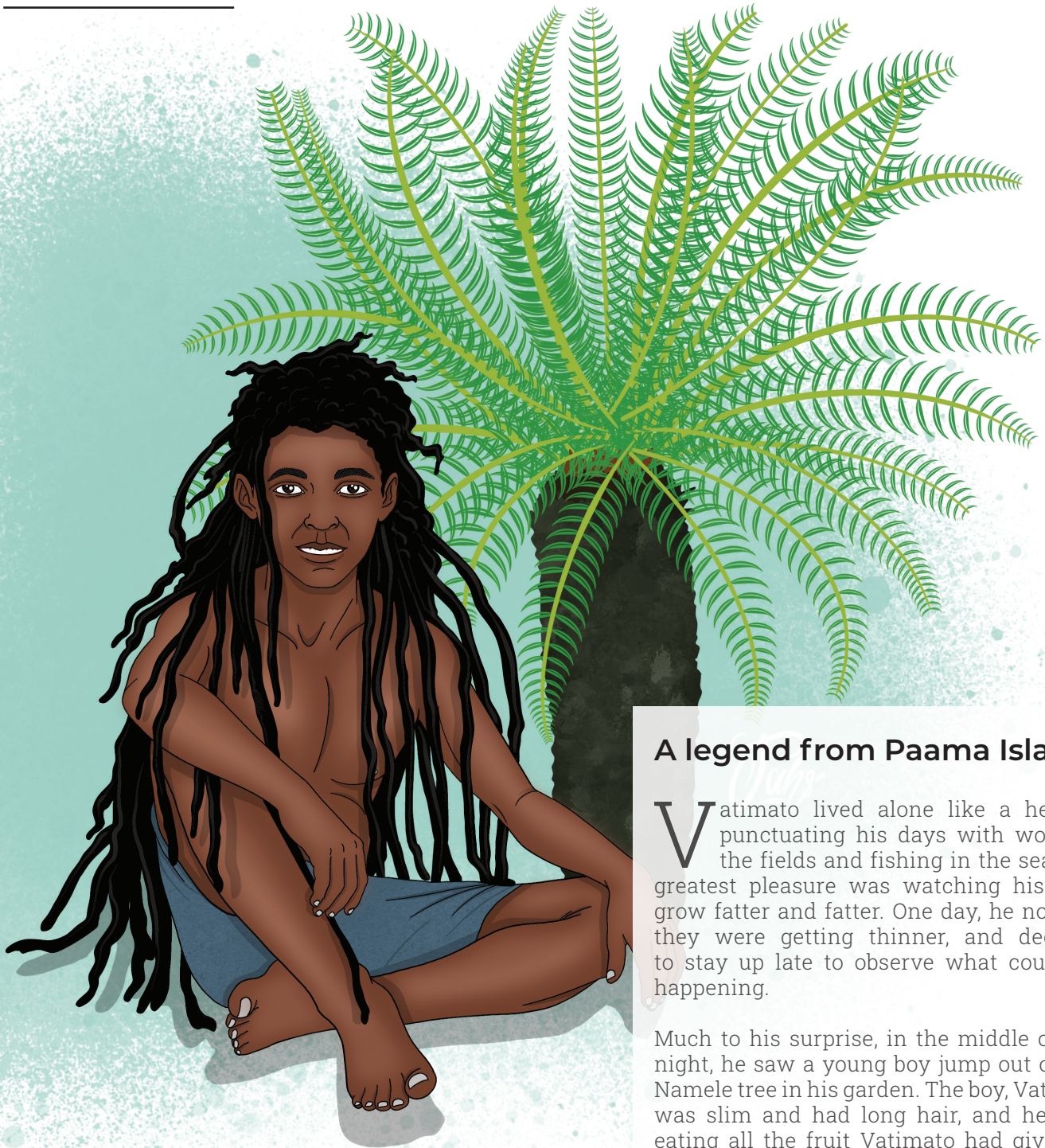
**Lovonda noi Barry Cultural Village.** Experience custom ceremonies that have been passed down the generations. Listen

**Womens handicraft market.** Display of Traditional food, dance and handicrafts. Located in Walaha in west Ambae. Transport to and from Vui Volcano Bungalow included in price. 2 hours 5000vt p.p.



# THE NAMELE'S CHILD

MALAMPA PROVINCE



## A legend from Paama Island

Vatimato lived alone like a hermit, punctuating his days with work in the fields and fishing in the sea. His greatest pleasure was watching his pigs grow fatter and fatter. One day, he noticed they were getting thinner, and decided to stay up late to observe what could be happening.

Much to his surprise, in the middle of the night, he saw a young boy jump out of the Namele tree in his garden. The boy, Vatmah, was slim and had long hair, and he was eating all the fruit Vatimato had given to his pigs. Vatimato, feeling sorry for the boy, offered to be his father and take care of him, to which Vatmah agreed, on the condition that Vatimato never cut a Namele leaf.



Vatimato accepted and the two of them lived happily for many years, learning to fish and farm together, and even building a canoe to explore nearby islands.

One day, they were invited to a feast in a nearby village. While they were there, Vatimato joined the dancing and absentmindedly grabbed a Namele leaf. Vatmah was heartbroken, and he left without a word. Vatimato looked for Vatmah everywhere, but he could not find him.

He returned home, feeling sad and angry with himself. He never touched a Namele leaf again, and the memory of Vatmah stayed with him forever. He was reminded of his mistake and the pain of loss each time he looked at the Namele tree in his garden.

Despite this, he never stopped loving Vatmah and hoped that he would find happiness in his life. The moral of the story is that we should think carefully before making promises, especially

when you deeply want something in return, as we may not be able to keep them and our actions can have far-reaching consequences. Vatimato had promised Vatmah he would never cut a Namele leaf, yet he was unable to keep his promise, which resulted in Vatmah leaving and never returning.

This taught Vatimato a valuable lesson about honoring his word and the importance of being mindful of his actions.



## The Majestic Namele Tree of Vanuatu

The namele tree, is a famous cycad of Vanuatu. Growing very tall, its height is often very impressive. Its trunk can reach up to 10 meters (33 feet) in diameter when very old. It carries many large branches and its leaves are used for medicinal purposes.

A pair of namele leaves appears on the national flag and coat of arms. The Namele tree has a long and rich history, dating back to the time of the first settlements of Vanuatu. The local communities see it as a place of spiritual significance, home to the gods and spirits. It is a symbol of respect, peace and reverence.

The tree is generally surrounded by a number of smaller trees,

which are believed to be its guardians.

The Namele Leaf serves as a powerful taboo sign. For example, a branch of Namele planted in a lagoon or on the shore will signify it is forbidden to fish. A branch of Namele planted in front of a fruit tree will signify do not harvest the fruits.

In order to be respectful of traditions, one will strictly respect these signs. It is important to note that, those restrictions are also helping the communities protect the environment and the conservation of resources.

## Where to stay on Paama Island

**Tavir Guest house - Liro village**  
**Provincial headquarter**  
 Owner: Chief Kenneth  
 Contact: 5669724  
 1500VT pp per night + 1000Vt for 3 meals  
 2 bedrooms  
 Room 1: 3beds  
 Room 2: 2beds  
 Airport transfer 1000VT one way.  
 Transfers by truck (15mins) or boat (10mins) depending on road condition.

**Siko Guest house - Liro village**  
**Siko Nemtugoon – Owner**  
 1000VT per person  
 1 house self-contained with 2 rooms (4 single beds in each)  
 2 Kayaks, swimming, snorkelling (byo snorkelling gears), just in front of the beach of Liro village.  
 Siko also owns a boat and can take guests snorkelling or fishing  
 Self-contained, owner don't want to cook.  
 Bucket toilet & shower  
 Siko and his wife are managers of the cooperative shop.

**Lopevi gateway - Vutekai village**  
 Owner: Sam Abel  
 Contact: 5939483  
 Transfers from Airport to Liro by truck – 1000VT  
 (15mins) per trip then boat transfer to Vutekai – 5000VT per trip (30mins)  
 2500VT per night per person meals included  
 One bungalow - 3 beds  
 Self-contained  
 Bucket shower  
 VIP toilet  
 Activities - Snorkelling, Surfing



# NAWIMBA

*Your Tourism Guide*

## ADVERTISING RATES TOURISM & HOSPITALITY BUSINESSES ONLY

BACK COVER:-----70 000 BEFORE VAT  
1/3 PAGE-----20 000 BEFORE VAT



BACK COVER: 1  
PUBLICITY 1/3 PAGE: 6 SPACES AVAILABLE

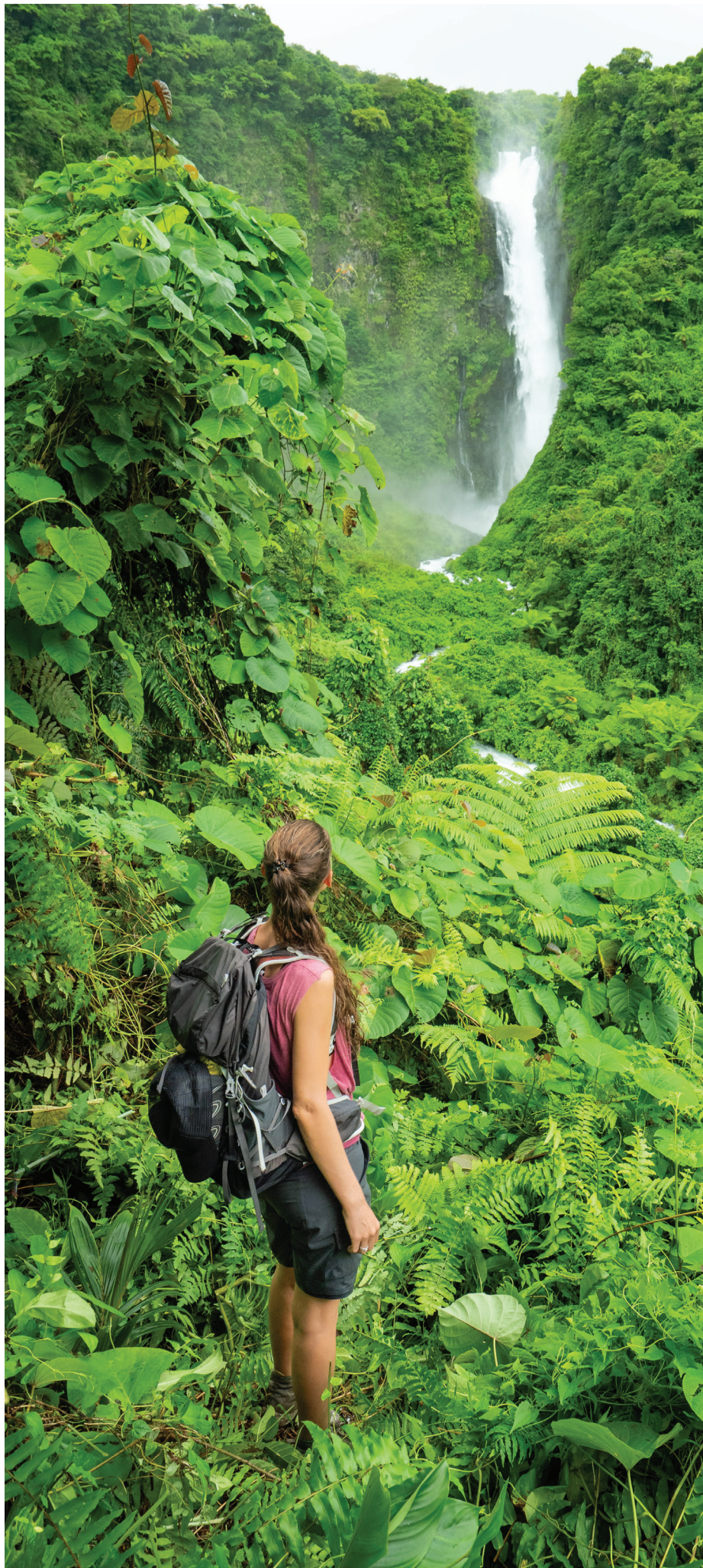
NAWIMBA IS A FREE MAGAZINE

5,000 COPIES PRINTED EVERY 3 MONTHS

DISTRIBUTION: VTO, HOTELS, RESORTS,  
RESTAURANTS AND ALL AIRPORTS OF VANUATU...

EMAIL: [HELLO@NEXT.COM.VU](mailto:HELLO@NEXT.COM.VU) | PHONE: 24404





## GOING OFF-GRID IN THE BANKS

To Vanuatu locals, the Banks Islands conjure up imagery of rugged, isolated islands with rich cultural diversity, epic hiking and stunning beaches.

Accessed by air services from Santo, the key islands for visitors are Vanua Lava, Mota Lava (and neighbouring Rah) and Gaua. Getting to The Banks requires a bit of planning to make the most of it. Take your time to explore the Banks Islands, and you'll be richly rewarded with a destination few have visited.

Gaua is the most popular of the Banks Islands. Known for its stunning landscapes with an active volcano, Vanuatu's largest lake and highest waterfall, it's brilliant for adventure seekers.

Mota Lava and Rah are small (it takes about 2.5 hours to walk around Mota Lava), though pack a punch with what they offer. Whether it's climbing Sleeping Mountain on Mota Lava, kicking back on Rah's beaches while watching snake dancing or visiting for the St Andrews & Traditional Leaf Fishing Festival, you'll find the journey is worth it.

Vanua Lava has mountains, a volcano, waterfalls and lush rainforest. Many visitors come to Vanua Lava for the Vanua Lava Festival, as well as some great hikes.

TORA PROVINCE



# SYMPATHY FOR A DEVIL



## TORA PROVINCE

In the Northern Islands of Vanuatu, a man from Tagtan spent the day fishing and harvesting yams with a friend. However, during lunch, he realized that his friend was not who he seemed. A devil had taken on his appearance. Despite feeling fear, the man also found himself feeling some sympathy for this devil and continued to enjoy the day.

The devil eventually confided in the man, revealing his true identity and expressing a desire to show him the underground world. Intrigued, the man agreed to go along. The devil told him to gather some mushrooms that glow in the dark and some breadfruit sticks. At night, when it was already very dark and difficult to distinguish any shapes, they approached the "nasara" of Sarevugvug, a place where the devils gathered for feasts.

As they entered, the other devils could smell the man's flesh and became ravenous. "There must be a human among us," they growled. "We can smell his flesh." But the devil who had been posing as the man's friend protected him, saying, "No, there is no man! It is a devil just like us! Just look at his big eyes!" As he spoke, the man held up the glowing mushrooms over his head, which the other devils took as a sign of his true identity. Another devil spoke up, saying, "But it still smells like human flesh!" The protector devil replied, "No, there is no man! It is

a devil like us! Just listen to his bones."

As he spoke, the man held up the breadfruit sticks over his head and knocked them together, which the other devils also took as a sign that he was one of them. With the danger seemingly passed, the protector devil began to sing and dance, and all of the devils joined in, falling into a trance. While they were distracted, the man took the opportunity to escape and ran back to his village.

When the dance ended, the devils

realized they had been tricked and set off in pursuit of the man. But it was too late. The man had safely returned home, excited by the incredible experience. This story teaches us the importance of trusting our instincts when it comes to people and being cautious of those who may not be who they appear to be. It also shows that there is always room for moments of compassion and understanding with others, no matter how different they may be.





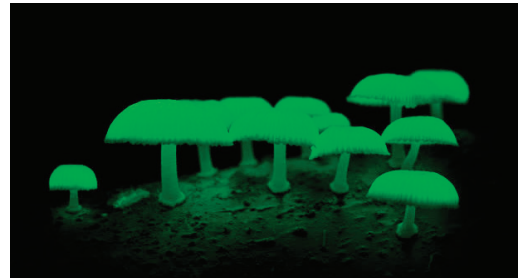
## Fun facts

### The lisepep

As in many countries around the world, Vanuatu has hundreds of legends featuring magical small creatures living in the bush. The most famous ones are with no doubt the lisepeps who are known to live in the Banyan trees. The cheeky drawves often play tricks. It is recommended to be vigilant...

### The mushrooms

The luminescent mushrooms of Vanuatu are exceptionally bright at night. Brian Perry who has a PhD from Harvard and who is currently Associate Professor of Biology at California State University, East Bay has come all the way to the archipelago to study the phenomena that can be seen in several islands. A pleasure for the eyes and endless games for children.



## Most famous cultural tours in Banks Islands

### Gaua Water Dance Music



Water music is the distinct traditional practice of the women from Gaua island. You don't want to miss this incredible show when you visit the home of the authentic water music. This cultural tour is mesmerizing and unforgettable, a true taste of the culture of Gaua.

You will see 10 different kinds of music during the performance. Female guests are free to join in and practice water music with the performers at the end of the show – it may look easy but it is hard to do! Give it a go! Refreshments of local fruits and coconuts are included after the show.

### Saint Andrew Fishing Festival



For more than 100 years, the people of Rah and neighbouring Mota Lava in the Banks group of islands have been coming together to combine custom tradition with Christianity celebrating the life of St. Andrew.

This is a three-day event, with visitors welcome to join in the extraordinary culture and celebrations. Fish using a giant traditional coconut leaves fishing net, taste the "volcano baked" food. For more details please contact: Tel: +678 5378084

### Rah Snake Dance



The Rah Snake Dance is unique to Rah Island and can only be performed by the local men. They paint themselves black and white to mimic sea snakes and hold a leaf in their mouth and carry sticks decorated with feathers and orange inedible fruits. The dance takes place on a white sandy beach overlooking the famous Rocks of Rah. The tour begins with an introduction about the origins of the Rah Snake Dance and story behind the dances. At the end of the performance guests – both male and female, will be invited to join in the dance.



# ARTIST'S CORNER

If you are a loyal reader of the Nawimba magazine, you may have noticed that this edition is once again illustrated by Robea, who goes by his art's name: Jahs'. This Nivatu artist showcases his talent through drawings, paintings, and also murals that can be found throughout the streets of the capital, Port Vila. His unique style blends Oceanic culture with street art, creating a combination that both surprises and enchants.

He has decided to embrace modern art and go digital. He has now started incorporating digital tools such as graphic design software into his works, allowing him to experiment with new forms of expression and bring his unique blend of Oceanic culture and street art to life in new and exciting ways. He has also been able to reach a wider audience through digital platforms, allowing his works to be seen and appreciated by a larger community.



<https://www.facebook.com/islandgraff>



[https://www.instagram.com/island\\_graffic/](https://www.instagram.com/island_graffic/)





MI TUMORO  
**VANUATU**  
*Travel Expo*

# SAVE THE DATES !

Thursday 30th march 2023 in Luganville  
Friday 31st March & Saturday 1st April 2023 in Port Vila





YOU'RE INVITED  
TO JOIN US  
BACK IN VANUATU

WELKAM  
BACK TO  
*Vanuatu!*