

Bula (Hello in Fijian) Mum

**BEST ADVENTURE EVER...** This sums it up in three words. I have just got back to the resort and I cannot stop thinking about the experience I just had on the Sigatoka River Safari.

I was picked up this morning from the Resort by their mini-coach transfer (which is lovely by the way) and transported the short distance to Sigatoka Town. On our trip we had a granddaddy of one family on tour with us, from the 27 year old grandson to the 90 year old granddaddy...!

After the short stopover in Sigatoka Town, we board our mini-coach to begin our Safari; we board our mini-coach to begin our adventure. As soon as you leave town you are surrounded by the rich, fertile lands that make the Sigatoka Valley so spectacular.

Arriving at the departure point, we are warmly welcomed by the Safari crew who are all smiles and greet us with a big BULA and a cheeky line, "Welcome to the Jungle" as we disembark from the mini-coach.

The whole group are supplied with life jackets, given a safety briefing and appointed our "Chief". We then board the safari jet boats, from the moment you head up river you know what you are doing is special!!!

The scenic ride up the river is a sensory overload, with the hills, the lush green vegetation, the Fijian people and the majestic river itself. The water has a green tinge and is clear enough to see the fish swimming by and the rocks lining the river bed as we zip over the shallow areas of Fiji's longest river.

After a memorable trip upriver, we arrive at the highlight of the tour, which is the village!! We are welcomed in with such genuine warmth that you immediately feel at home and like you are visiting old friends. What's truly unique about the tour is that each day the safari crew visits a different village so as to not overburden the local community and I think this helps reduce the impact tourism has on their daily lives. This means the tourists get to see authentic villages and its people, on their terms.



After the short stroll from the river to the village, we make our way to the Chiefly house to present our 'saisave' (offering) of Yagona (kava). This traditional Fijian kava ceremony is sacred to visiting dignitaries and guests. Our Chief Colin, was presented with the first bowl of kava and after he gulped it down turned to the rest of us and said "it's a Fijian milkshake".

Once the ceremony was completed we are taken on a tour of the picturesque village which has the most beautiful scenery. We were able to get an idea of how the people live within the village and the tranquility of the area is something you can only experience as I cannot do it justice with words. Hopefully my pictures can help show you what I mean.

Our two village guides Pita and Mera, escorted us to the community hall where we were then able to meet the rest of the village. The children are just adorable and the sumptuous Fijian lunch just prepared for us was wonderful as we got to taste, touch and feel what it is like to live as a 'kaviti' (Fijian). After lunch the band boys began to play and we were all up and dancing and I can tell you that the locals really know how to 'shake it'!

In the time we were there I felt like I made so many new friends. It was so intimate meeting the villagers this way. They are so genuine in the way they receive you. One of the girls on tour commented to me how she felt so humbled to be there and I knew exactly what she meant.

Before we knew it was time to leave. The villagers sang the Fijian farewell song of 'Isa Lei' and hearing this song and knowing what it meant had me in tears, but I knew I would be returning very, very soon. Next time will have to be with you guys!!

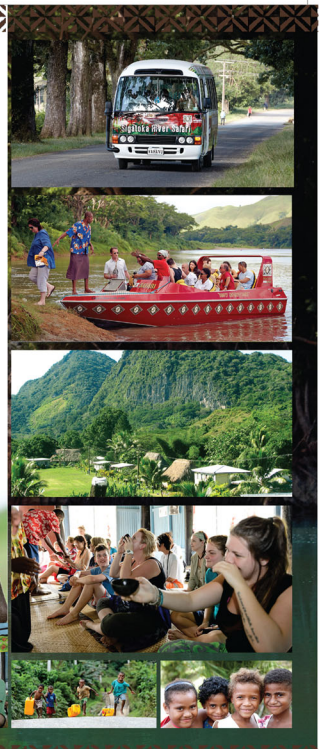
Lots of love and will speak to you soon

Brooke

P.S: Tomorrow I'm doing their new tour, the 'Off Road Cave Safari', can't wait!!



**"You've come this far, now go all the way. See the Heart & Soul of Fiji."**



A major factor in the decision to work with 15 villages was that Jay did not want to encroach on the village's daily lifestyle too much & wanted to strike a balance between tourism & the village's traditional ways.

To date, the Sigatoka River Safari has assisted in the development of these rural communities directly & indirectly, with the vanua (people) of Niwasa seeing much needed tourism development deep in the interior, enabling them to share their amazing spirit with many people from around the world. To date so many generous acts have occurred with guests providing school scholarships, clothing, footpaths, church constructions, kindergartens, school supplies, financial donations and the greatest reward has seen thousands of people falling in love with Fiji!!!!

We are so lucky to be able to share this amazing part of Fiji with all our friends, just as Pita did with Jay in 1991



**"Unforgettable"**

**What to Bring on Safari:**

SUNGLASSES & SUNSCREEN, CAMERA WITH PLENTY OF MEMORY SPACE/AND BATTERY (FULLY CHARGED), SENSE OF ADVENTURE, COMFORTABLE CLOTHING & FOOTWEAR, TOWEL & CHANGE OF CLOTHES, BOTTLE OF WATER, YOUR SMILE.

Operating: Monday through to Saturday  
Morning tour departs 8:45am  
Afternoon tour departs 1:00pm

Duration: 4.5hrs  
Ages: Everyone and Anyone

- Transfers from all hotels located on the Coral Coast (Warwick Resort to Shangri-La Fijian Resort), Nazadola, Sonaisali, Denarau and Nadi areas.
- Sigatoka River Safari has a stringent cancellation policy in place to avoid disappointment of guests.

Cancellation: Please note that any cancellation made between 0-24hrs results in a 100% cancellation fee. 24-48hrs notice will result in a 50% cancellation fee. All cancellations made with more than 48hrs notice will incur no penalties.

Conditions: Sigatoka River Safari reserves the right to cancel or amend any trip due to river, road or weather conditions. Stringent safety procedures are observed. Sigatoka River Safari cannot be held responsible for personal injuries or for damage of equipment.

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2007 Best Adventure Tour

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**FIJI'S ORIGINAL & THE WORLD'S FIRST**

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As seen on Getaway

Fiji's Coral Coast  
The Water, The Sun, The Spirit

**"It Was All a Dream"**

In 1991, an Australian 13yr old boy by the name Jay Whyte visited Fiji for the first time with his family and family friends. On the third day of their stay Jay's life would change forever when he met 23yr old Pita Matasau, a Security Guard at the Resort.

Soon after befriending Pita, Jay became his shadow, following Pita everywhere on his rounds of the resort & listening to the amazing stories Pita would share about Fiji, his village & his family. Two days of amazing stories, learning all about Fiji, it was then that Pita invited Jay & family to his village of Draba, deep in the Fijian interior.

After a 2hr inland excursion, Jay & his family arrived at Draba Village & would be blown away by what they experienced. Spending an unforgettable day in the village, swimming in the river and generally experiencing the life of the Fijian people saw Jay fall in love with Fiji, its culture & its people!!!

Pita & Jay remained friends & kept in touch writing letters back & forth in the days before E-mails & TEXT's. Jay would visit Fiji every two years thereafter & Pita would visit Australia for the first time in 1993.

During a trip to New Zealand in 1992 an IDEA was born. Enjoying a jet boat ride on a river in the North Island, it was then Jay as a 14yr old had a vision, to transport people to Draba along the Sigatoka River. This idea would sit in hibernation for many years, until 2003 when facing a cross roads in life, Jay's idea came flooding back into his mind & it went from being just an idea, to a working project.

Intensive research followed and by great coincidence, when enquiring about building a boat in New Zealand Jay had unknowingly contacted the pioneer of Safari jet boating in New Zealand, Neil Ross.

Jay worked with Neil to build a boat for the conditions in Fiji.

August 2005, Jay moved to Fiji & registered his business in Fiji with his lifelong friend Pita on board as a business partner; he was lucky enough to meet Josh Ratukuna who would join the team and would accompany Jay to New Zealand to learn the art of being a jet boat captain under the tutelage of Neil Ross.

9th March 2006, Fiji's Original and the World's First ever Jet boat & village experience came to life.

**"Simply"**