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## South Pacific Handbook, 7th Edition (Review)

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 *South Pacific Handbook*, 7th Edition

David Stanley, 2000; 990 pages, 147 maps, US\$ 24.00

ISBN: 1-56691-172-9

Moon Travel Handbooks, Emeryville, CA

*Review by L. L. (Bud) Henry*

The front cover of this guidebook has a brilliant color photograph of Ahu Akivi on Easter Island, restored by William Mulloy in 1960. The back cover succinctly tells what's between the covers. This book would be an excellent textbook for a university course on Geography of the South Pacific 101, as well as what the incidental or seasoned traveler needs in order to plan and execute a visit to any of the fifteen islands or island groups covered.

This 7th edition contains 65 more pages of information than the previous edition. We miss the sixteen pages of color photographs that were outstanding additions to previous editions (probably cut due to the cost constraints of publishing). The ample Table of Contents and Index can readily lead the traveler, armchair tripper or dreamer throughout one's South Pacific voyage. A fifty-page Introduction covers the basics: the land and ocean, its formation, and the flora and fauna. And then 'man' is placed within all this, with history, government, economy and customs. The physical traits and cultural attributes of the Polynesians and Melanesians who inhabit the South Pacific are discussed, including the two Polynesian islands of Rennell and Bellona in Melanesia. (Only three places in the South Pacific are on UNESCO's World Heritage List: Easter, Henderson and Rennell Islands). Many interesting and useful tables, maps, drawings and photographs are liberally dispersed throughout this fact-filled handbook, and included is information on such subjects as exchange rates, the largest islands in the South Pacific, the longest reefs in the world, dates of European entrance into the Pacific. Other subjects cover trading partners, tourist arrivals in 1997, Pacific Air Routes, a Pacific Time chart and lists of what to take with you. Interesting information on special topics is also strewn throughout the handbook, including such subjects as The Greenhouse Effect, The Law of the Sea, Museums of the Pacific, The Pacific in Literature, Ecotourism, Pioneers of Pacific Aviation, Philately (Stamp collecting), tips on buying a black pearl, Paul Gauguin, John Adams, The Tu'i Tongas, The Riddle of the Joyita, Tropical Cricket, Cargo Cults, Women in Vanuatu, Nguzunguzu (now I know!), Traditional Currency in the Solomons, and The Crawl. There are also native language-to-English Capsule Vocabularies for Tahitian, Tongan, Samoan, Tuvaluan, Hindi, Fijian, French, Bislama and Solomon Islands Pijin.

A large section called On The Road details the highlights of the different places and spells out the required information that is the hallmark of all travel guides; how to get there, accommodations, what to eat and drink, getting around, entertainment, recreation, arts and crafts and what to buy. An important section on services and information covers the official requirements for a visit and the location of Diplomatic Missions. Ailments and health precautions are treated in general cautionary terms.

The chapter format mirrors the general format above. Al-

though the chapter on Easter Island is comparatively small, it illustrates the basic format and subjects covered by the rest of the islands. The On the Road section covers the sights of Rapa Nui, the archaeological sites, a map of Hanga Roa, accommodations (budget to luxury), food and entertainment, and other things such as shopping, money, visa requirements, and information services. The section on transportation covers getting there, package tours, and getting around the island. This basic format does what a travel handbook should do—inform and guide the traveler. A capsule Spanish vocabulary would be handy for Easter Island.

Towards the back of the book are thirty-two pages on resources, including tourism offices and a bibliography with about a hundred website/email addresses. An additional ten pages contain lists of over 330 websites and 360 email addresses for the South Pacific. Keying into <www.netaxs.com/~trance/rapanui.html> (the Easter Island Home Page) for instance, can help the prospective traveler, traveler or dreamer on augmenting the handbook with more information about Easter Island. Other lists give alternate place names, a glossary, and Pacific airport codes. An all-important U.S.-Metric conversion helper will make Americans happy. Clearly, the people of the South Pacific have indeed entered into age of high-tech!

Adventure is a traveler's quest, the object being to feel that you are the first one to see or experience a place. The quality of travel-tools to help plan, experience, and recall (putting it back together again) a trip is important. That's where an A+ guidebook can make the difference between having a memorable adventure or one that quickly fades into the sunset, and South Pacific Handbook is an A+ user-friendly tell-it-like-it-is South Pacific companion that cuts to the chase! Highly recommended.

 *Micronesia Handbook*, 5th Edition

Neil M. Levy, 2000; 308 pp., 71 maps, charts. US\$ 16.95.

ISBN: 1-56691-162-1

Moon Travel Handbooks, Emeryville, CA

*Review by Felicia R. Beardsley*

I have been traveling to Micronesia for the last decade. But with the hundreds of islands that make up each archipelago, nearly every trip means entering a new place, which then sets into motion a new set of challenges in getting around, learning new customs, developing word lists, and grasping local protocols that often go unexplained. Neil Levy's *Micronesia Handbook* is like taking a shortcut through the initial confusion of arrival and the slow acquaintance of place that follows. The introductory chapter provides a sound historical summary of one of the most diverse regions on the planet, occupying an area of 4,500,000 square miles with a land base of less than 0.03%, or 1,245 square miles. It sets the context for any traveler to the western Pacific, and with each succeeding chapter guides both novice and veteran through a variety of information that covers everything from getting around to health tips, to practicalities of food and accommodations, to must-see sights and recreational opportunities.\*

The book is divided into island groups, countries, U.S. ter-