

Completing Destination Pacific Islands

How will I use the information in this unit?

You may find that this unit is slightly different from other units you may have studied; it is designed to reflect how you might find and use information once you are working in the tourism industry. Some information about the Pacific Islands is provided in this manual but most of the information will come from your own research. Each section contains a series of activities. As you work through the activities, you will be finding out more about the needs of particular tourists and locating information to meet these needs; just like you would if you were working as a travel agent or travel wholesaler.

Regardless of where you work in tourism, there are a huge number of ways that you might end up using information about different holiday destinations. This unit works from the perspective of teaching you how to understand and sell the Pacific Islands as a destination to different types of tourists. Knowing about the Pacific Islands will help you relate to these tourists, no matter where you work.

What about as a travel agent?

The information in this unit will be particularly important to you if you want to work within the sales sector as a travel agent or travel wholesaler. A reminder that travel agents will complete the following tasks as part of their job:

- Book accommodation, transport, tours and cruises for clients
- Prepare itineraries
- Issue tickets, vouchers and other documentation, and collect payment.

Retail travel agents may also:

- Give advice on travel or holiday plans
- Give information on accommodation, transport and places of interest
- Advise and help with visas, passports, insurance and other travel-related documents.

Understanding holiday destinations better is a really important part of completing these tasks.



Important note

Remember the most important thing about working as a travel agent is to be able to sell a travel experience to a customer based on their needs. Make sure you view the information in this unit, not just as facts about a destination, but also in terms of what particular tourists might find interesting or appealing.

How do I complete the unit

As you know, completing Destination Pacific Islands will involve working through a number of activities. Depending on your situation, you might be completing these activities individually or in groups. Your tutor will guide you as to how and when you work on the activities. In the next part of this section we will discuss the two elements you will need to understand to complete the activities:

- Accessing the information you need
- Understanding the tourists you are working with.

Let's start by looking at some information sources you might want to use to complete the activities. The first information source we will discuss is the Computerised Reservation System.

Reservation systems

What are they?

In order to do their job effectively, travel agents need access to up-to-the-minute travel information, for example, flights, accommodation, activities and events. Complex computer booking systems have been developed to achieve this. These systems are collectively called Computer Reservation Systems (CRS) and/or Global Distribution Systems (GDS). There are a number of GDS used by travel agents and other travel companies. The three major GDS used by travel agents worldwide are:

- SABRE (Semi-Automated Business Research Environment)
- Galileo
- Amadeus.

Each of these systems has been developed by a specific airline or group of airlines, but is used by a variety of different end-users. For example, **SABRE** was first created by American Airlines, and then further developed by All Nippon Airways, Cathay Pacific Airways, China Airlines and Singapore Airlines. In New Zealand, it is used by Gullivers Pacific Group, STA travel and BTI New Zealand.

Galileo was developed by United Airlines and further developed by Aer Lingus, Air Canada, Alitalia, British Airways, Swissair, and US Airways. It is also used by Flight Centre in New Zealand. The final GDS is **Amadeus** which was formed in 1987 through a partnership between Air France, Iberia, Lufthansa and SAS. Amadeus is the largest supplier of booking technology to the Australian/New Zealand area with House of Travel being just one New Zealand company that uses this system.

Information commonly sourced by a travel agent via a GDS may include:

- Information on airlines, airline schedules and seat availability
- Accommodation
- Activities and attractions
- Land transport options
- Cruises
- Currency, passport and visa information
- Climate conditions.

But note that not all bookings are necessarily made via a GDS.

How do I access them?

Your learning institution may already have one of these computer reservation systems available for you to use or practice on. Check with your tutor to see if this is possible. If you can't access a training version of SABRE, Galileo and/or Amadeus then you might want to use an online travel guide such as Travelocity which is a sub-system of the SABRE group. A New Zealand based version of this system is available at: www.travelocity.co.nz

Other websites that provide booking options include:

- www.expedia.co.nz
- www.orbitz.co.nz
- www.travel.com
- www.priceline.com
- www.airnewzealand.co.nz

However, the following resources can be just as useful in providing the information you need.

Travel guidebooks and brochures

What are they?

There is a huge amount of written information generated for travellers; either in terms of guidebooks dealing with particular destinations, or in terms of holiday brochures and guides for specific tourists. If you don't have easy access to a GDS or the Internet, you can still complete all of the activities in the unit by using written resources. Some of the resources you might use are:

- Lonely Planet guides – these are great guidebooks that provide general information about destinations as well as the specifics of tourist needs such as accommodation options, activities etc.

- Other travel guides – The Lonely Planet series isn't the only available travel guidebook; a number of guidebooks exist for particular destinations and/or tourism markets. For example, the Let's Go series tends to focus on information for tourists travelling on a limited budget
- Jasons Travel Guides – the Jasons travel group produce free travel guides for Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific. The content in these guides is variable but can include accommodation information, attractions/activities for destinations, route planners and maps
- Other travel brochures – most travel agents will have brochures that they provide for customers that list anything from car hire to scuba diving trips. These brochures tend to provide information about lots of different products that are available in the same location; for example, the various Pacific Islands.

How do I access them?

Your first step in accessing written information on the Pacific Islands as a tourism destination is to talk to your tutor. This is particularly important if you are considering accessing travel guides or brochures. Your local travel agent might be really happy to provide brochures for your tutor but may not be as happy to deal with multiple visits from 10-15 individual students.

In terms of guidebooks, check with your tutor but also check the local libraries; either at your learning organisation or in your local community.

Internet sites and searches

What are they?

The development of the Internet has had a major impact on the tourism industry. Often travellers will conduct their own extensive Internet search about a destination before they even begin to book specific aspects of their holiday. Many travellers will book some or all of their tourism purchases using the Internet. You can use Internet in the same way to complete the activities in this unit. Take a look at the list below for some useful approaches:

- Official Websites – Most countries will have an official website aimed at tourists. These websites can be useful for providing general information about destination as well as the specifics of activities/ accommodation etc. They can also provide information about visas and entry requirements for a country. The website information for the eight Pacific Islands covered by this unit is listed below:
 - Fiji: www.bulafiji.com
 - Cook Islands: www.cookislands.travel
 - Vanuatu: www.vanuatu.travel

- Samoa: www.visitsamoa.ws
 - Tonga: www.tongaholiday.com
 - French Polynesia: www.tahiti-tourisme.com
 - New Caledonia: www.newcaledoniatourism-south.com
 - Norfolk Island: www.norfolkisland.com.au
- Business Websites – Some of the activities in this unit will ask you to provide information about specific tourism products; for example, international or domestic airfares. Many businesses providing a product for tourists will have a website of their own but you might also want to access websites that compare products and prices. For example, for airfares you might access the websites of different airlines and/or visit the Flight Centre or House of Travel website to compare flights and prices
 - Travel Guide Websites – Both the Lonely Planet and the Let's Go series have websites that compliment their guidebooks
 - General Internet searching – A great start point for travel information is the general Internet search. Start with a search engine such as Google. You can access Google at: www.google.co.nz

How do I access them?

You can access any or all of these options as long as you have access to the Internet. You can either use the hyperlinks provided in this section or enter the key terms for what you want into the search engine.

You might also want to try searching by entering the company name into the search engine and accessing their site that way. Check with your tutor on how to access the Internet for this unit and the use of Internet searching techniques.

Although you can complete the activities in the unit without using the Internet, this sort of searching is a large part of the travel industry and you will need Internet searching skills if you want to work in tourism.



Important note

Whatever information you use to complete the activities in this unit, it is important that you take the time to fully understand the information you are using as you complete the activity. As a travel agent you will be looking for the travel solution that best suits your customer so don't just put down the first answer you find; make sure it really meets the tourist need that is outlined in the activity. Always put longer answers in your own words.

That completes our guide to accessing the information for the activities. The next step is to meet the different tourists you will be working with as you complete Destination Pacific Islands.

