

GOOD

Travel Like You Give a Damn: Paying a Conscious Visit to Fiji

by Kelsey Barrett
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The third largest island in the constellation of 300, Taveuni is only a ten-hour flight plus a puddle jump from the west coast of the U.S. Fiji tempts the senses with the charm of Polynesian friendship, Jacques Cousteu's favorite diving reefs, wild parrots sharing your shade in an ancient banyan tree, and papayas that hang from trees like breasts. Working with Fijians in cultivating one patch of land at a time with conscious techniques, while grounded in both ancient and cutting edge practices, can only build the healthy resiliency of human and humus. If you care to pay a conscious visit, it's easy to do while you work in God given country.



Taveuni's rich history of growing, married with the economic necessity for community food producing creates daily dialogue about weather patterns, crop sharing, and planting cycles. Our local taxi driver Bola supplied me with four banana trees or 'suckers' and one lime tree instructing, "Only plant on high tide, that's what the grandmothers say."



With soil health and longevity at the forefront of local concern I spoke with Kini, the retreat manager, and her son Isaac about building a place to compost. We designed this area using wildcrafted ‘torch sticks’ as the bones of the bin, and used raffia—a plastic twine and great alternative to communities with limited resources—to secure the torch sticks together. We coppiced the torch stick with machetes and built the bin down wind from the house at water’s edge.



With the garden budding, a late night Google search put me on the trail of [Tei Tei Taveuni](#). Launching in 2012, TTT is a sustainable agriculture non-profit that assesses practicum versus island finite resource. Volunteer-driven, they educate farmers on viable solutions to preserve agricultural soil, clean water, and farmers' economies. Their chairman, Ian Simpson, shared a simple bit of advice on best practices for our side of the island: “add lime and phosphorus—the whole island needs it.”

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