

Suva

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View of Suva's industrial subdivision over looking the Suva Wharf



Suva within Fiji

Country	Fiji
Island	Viti Levu
Division	Central Division
Population (2007)	
Total	85,691

Suva is the [capital](#) and largest city of [Fiji](#). It is located on the southeast coast of the island of [Viti Levu](#), in the [Central Division](#), of which it is the administrative center. In 1877, it was decided to make Suva the capital of Fiji when the geography of former main European settlement at [Levuka](#) on the island of [Ovalau](#) proved too restrictive. The administration of the colony was moved from Levuka to Suva in 1882. At the 2007 [census](#) the city of Suva had a [population](#) of 85,691 [\[1\]](#). Including independent suburbs, the population of the Greater Suva urban area was 172,399 at the 2007 census [\[2\]](#).

Physical characteristics

Suva is the commercial and political centre of Fiji, not necessarily the cultural, and the largest urban area in the [South Pacific](#) outside of [Australia](#) and [New Zealand](#). It is Fiji's main port city.

Although Suva is on a peninsula, and almost surrounded by sea, the nearest beach is 40 kilometres (25 [mi](#)) away at Pacific Harbour, and the nearby coast is lined by mangroves. A significant part of the city centre, including the old [Parliament](#) Buildings, is built on reclaimed mangrove swamp.

Suva is noted for its considerable rainfall, it has a markedly higher rainfall than [Nadi](#) and the western side of [Viti Levu](#), which is known to Suva citizens as "the burning west". The First Governor of Fiji, [Sir Aurthur Gordon](#), allegedly remarked that it rained in Suva like he had seen no where else before and that there was hardly a day without rain.

Landmarks

A well-known landmark is the [Suva City Library](#) or the Carnegie Library, built in 1909 as well as many other colonial buildings.

The Government buildings complex sits on what was once the flowing waters of a creek. This was drained in 1935 and over five kilometres of reinforced concrete pilings were driven into the creek bed to support the massive buildings to be erected. After the foundation stone was laid in 1937, the building was completed in 1939; a new wing was completed in 1967. [Parliament](#), however, was moved to a new complex on [Ratu Sukuna Road](#) in 1992.

[Government House](#) was formerly the residence of Fiji's [colonial Governors](#) and, following independence in 1970, [Governors-General](#). It is now the official residence of Fiji's [President](#). Originally erected in 1882, it had to be rebuilt in 1928, following its destruction by lightning in 1921.

The Suva campus of the [University of the South Pacific](#) (USP) occupies what was once a [New Zealand military](#) base. It is the largest of the many USP campuses dotted throughout the South Pacific and the largest University in the [Pacific islands](#) outside [Hawai'i](#).

The Fiji Museum, located in [Thurston Gardens](#), was founded in 1904 and originally occupied the old town hall, but moved to its present location in 1954. The museum houses the most extensive collection of Fijian artifacts in the world, and is also a research and educational institution, specializing in archeology, the preservation of Fiji's oral tradition, and the publication of material on Fiji's language and culture.

Suva has around 78 parks, these include the new [Takashi Suzuki Garden](#), [Apted Park](#) at [Suva Point](#) which is a popular spot for viewing [sunrise](#) and [sunset](#), [Thurston Gardens](#) which was opened in 1913 and has flora from throughout the South Pacific.

Suva also has many shopping and retail areas, notably Cumming street, which has since colonial times, been a vibrant and colourful shopping area. Features of these street include the original colonial buildings and narrow roads. More modern shopping malls, such as the Suva Central Shopping Mall as well as MHCC are all part of the Development of the city to have a more modern sophisticated look.

Demographics of Suva

Suva is a multiracial and multicultural city. [Indigenous Fijians](#) and [Indo-Fijians](#), the two principal ethnic groups of Fiji, comprise the bulk of Suva's population, but the city is also home to the majority of Fiji's ethnic minority populations, which include Caucasians ([Europeans](#) or [Kaivalagi](#)), Part-

Europeans (of European and Fijian Descent) and [Chinese](#), amongst others. The majority of expatriates working in Fiji are also based in Suva. The most widely spoken language is [English](#), but [Fijian](#), [Hindustani](#), [Cantonese](#), and other [Indian](#) languages are also spoken by their respective communities.

Institutions

Suva is host to more international and regional intergovernmental agencies and [NGOs](#) than any other Pacific Island capital. Some of the bodies with a presence in Suva are:

- The [TRAFFIC Oceania](#) South Pacific Programme - funded by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, is located in Suva, in the offices of the WWF South Pacific Programme. The programme assists in the implementation of [CITES](#), but also strengthens collaboration with the [World Wide Fund for Nature](#).
- The [Fiji School of Medicine](#) - which is now classed as a regional agency and a member of the [Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific](#)
- The [University of the South Pacific](#) which operates a campus in Suva as well as at other South Pacific locations.
- The [Fiji Institute of Technology](#) which is a major polytechnic in Fiji and caters students from many small Pacific Island nations. It also has centres in other Fiji towns of Nadi, Ba and Labasa.
- The [Secretariat of the Pacific Community](#) (SPC)
- The [Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat](#)
- The [South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission](#).
- The [Fulton Seventh Day Adventist College](#).

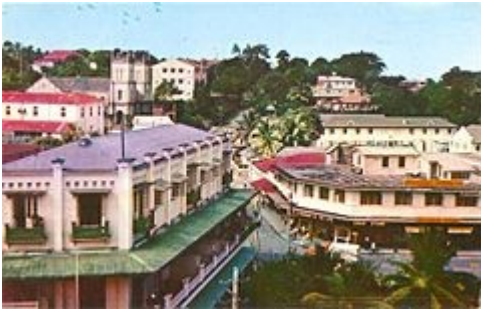
Municipal government

Suva has [municipal](#) status and is governed by a [Lord Mayor](#) and a 20-member [city council](#), which is controlled by the [Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua](#) following [elections](#) on [12 November 2005](#). The current Lord Mayor is [Ratu Peni Volavola](#).

History



Suva Central Business District in the 1940s



Suva Central Business District in the 1950s

In return for a promise to pay off debts owed to the [United States](#) by the [Bauan chieftain, Seru Epenisa Cakobau](#), the [Australian](#)-based [Polynesia Company](#) was granted 5000 km² of land, 575 km² of it near what was then the village of Suva, in 1868. The original intention was to develop a cotton farming industry, but the land and climate proved unsuitable.

Following the annexation of the Fiji Islands by the [United Kingdom](#) in 1874, the [colonial authorities](#) decided to move the capital to Suva from [Levuka](#) in 1877. The transfer was made official in 1882. [Colonel F.E. Pratt](#) of the [Royal Engineers](#) was appointed Surveyor-General in 1875 and designed the new capital, assisted by W. Stephens and Colonel R.W. Stewart.

Following the promulgation of the Municipal Constitution Ordinance of 1909, Suva acquired municipal status in 1910. The town initially comprised one square mile; these boundaries remained intact until 1952 when the [Muanikau](#) and [Samabula wards](#) were annexed, expanding its territory to 13 square kilometers. In October that year, Suva was proclaimed a City - Fiji's first. [Tamavua](#) was subsequently annexed; the most recent extension of the city boundaries has been to incorporate the [Cunningham](#) area to the north of the city. [Urban sprawl](#) has resulted in a number of suburbs that remain outside of the city limits; together with the city itself, they form a metropolitan area known as the [Greater Suva Area](#).

The city hosted the [2003 South Pacific Games](#), being the third time in the event's 40 year history that they had been held in Suva. As part of the hosting of the event a new [gymnasium](#) and indoor sports center, [swimming pool](#) and stadium, [field hockey](#) pitch and stands were built in the area around Suva, funded by the [government](#) and a \$16 million [People's Republic of China](#) aid package^[3].

Transportation

[Nausori International Airport](#) caters mainly to the domestic market, but can serve smaller international aircraft. It also has service to its immediate Pacific neighbors such as [Tuvalu](#) and [Tonga](#).