



Welcome to Rott's Manor

Pete & Mary Clukey

Fiji 2008 Trip Report

Sunday, 12/21/2008 – ATL to LAX then onto Nadi, Fiji

For once we don't have to get up early in the morning for a vacation; our flight isn't until after 4:00 pm. Since we were not sure about how much time we would have in LAX to grab dinner, we ordered from Delta's dinner menu. Mary had their Asian Chicken Salad and it was tasty. The only gripe that we have is the way LAX airport is laid out. There is no way to get from one terminal to another without exiting security and having to go back through the unpleasant lines and rescreening. Once on our Air Pacific flight, we are offered a dinner which both Pete & I declined. Then within an hour or so of departure, the lights are out and the pilot does not make unnecessary announcements which is nice so that you can actually sleep 7+ hours on the flight to Nadi. Then about two hours before landing they bring up the lights and serve breakfast. And it really wasn't too bad for airline food (folded scrambled eggs, hash brown patty, a chicken sausage link, fruit cup, dinner roll, & orange juice).

Monday, 12/22/2008 – Lost to the International Date Line.

Tuesday, 12/23/2008 – Arrive in Fiji

We awake on the plane and are served a fairly decent breakfast about 2 hours before we land in Nadi. Clearing immigration/customs in Fiji was really easy but it did take a while to process the 200 or so people who were in the line in front of us. Instructions from our travel agent direct us to go to the tour office in the airport this morning to pick up our vouchers for a day room & lounge for our day of departure. Well, we found the tour office, but they did not have our voucher & said that they would fax them to us later. Next we found our drivers, who zipped us around the island for 2 hours. Thankfully they did stop at a convenience store so that we could get something to drink. The drivers were very nice and gave us a bit of a tour on the way to the resort.

Once we arrived at Waidroka Bay Resort, we were immediately offered something to eat. The airline breakfast wasn't that big and Mary was hungry. So, she ordered the banana pancakes which were very yummy. Pete ordered French toast, but that got mixed up in the kitchen and all he got was toast. Since he wasn't as hungry as Mary was, he didn't send it back or even tell them of the error.

Julie & Darryl offered to take us out diving today if we wanted to. We thought it would be nice to have one day of rest. So, we spent the rest of the day relaxing and reading our books and checking out the resort. The main building has a dining area, bar, a lounge area with a TV and DVD player, a library with plenty of books to keep you busy and a couple acoustics guitars that Pete was very happy to see. On the front porch of the main building is a pool table which was the main source of entertainment in the evenings. The other favorite spot was the swimming pool (with outdoor bar) between the main building and the ocean.

For lunch today Mary had the soup & salad combination and Pete had a club sandwich & fries.

Dinner at Waidroka is served family style. Every night the staff (Julie, Darryl, Lo, & Cap) eats with their guest. It really makes staying here more personal. Tonight's meal was a pesto linguini with shrimp. Julie didn't think it was very good, but we thought it was ok.

Wednesday, 12/24/2008 – SCUBA

We started the morning with a continental breakfast, since we have to leave by 8:00 am for our morning dive which is a two tank shark dive. The Beqa Shark Dive is famous for its variety of sharks. Its most celebrated species that sometimes shows up for a feed is the Tiger Shark. But today the Tiger does not show up. We are treated to many large Bull Sharks, a few Lemon Sharks, & a couple of Tawny Nurse Sharks.

Yesterday Cap & Darryl caught a large trevalley (fish) and for lunch today it was made into a yummy fish & chips.

Tonight for dinner, we had a yummy lamb dish.

Thursday, 12/25/2008 – Christmas Day

No diving today, just relax at Waidroka Bay Resort all day, but Pete came down with a nasty cold. There was a nice Christmas Dinner Party tonight. Some of the neighbors were invited to join the staff & us for dinner. Pete misses dinner because of his cold, but the nice staff at Waidroka brings him a hot bowl of soup. Dinner tonight was amazing, there was chicken, lamb, mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy, and so much more that Mary can't remember it all.

Friday, 12/26/2008 – Another day of hanging out at the resort

Pete is not feeling too good & Mary stays with him to take care of him. She makes him drink lots of water & power-aid. For Mary it's a nice relaxing day of reading books.

Lunch today was grilled trevally (fish).

Tonight for dinner, Julie has made her grandmothers lasagna and it was very tasty.

Saturday, 12/27/2008 – Mary goes diving without Pete (what?!!)

Pete is not quite up for diving but is doing better than he was yesterday, so Mary (for the first time ever) goes diving without Pete. And it's just Jerry (driving the boat), Darryl (leading the dive), & Mary on board today. The dive site today is called "Tukini". We catch a sea turtle napping.

Mary failed to make notes on the meals that we ate for the rest of the week. For breakfast, Pete often enjoyed the banana pancakes, while Mary enjoyed the tasty fresh fruit plate. From their lunch menu, we enjoyed the beef tacos & the quesadillas. For dinner, we often had fresh fish prepared mostly grilled.

Sunday, 12/28/2008 – Mary goes diving without Pete

Pete is still not quite up for diving but is continuing to improve. Mary goes diving again without Pete. Today we go to a dive/surf site called "Frigates". There are six guests on board. Three begin the day surfing, one snorkels all day, and the two girls plan to dive all day long. The diving was excellent. We spotted lion fish, white tip reef sharks, some eagle rays and a huge school of very large bump head parrotfish. Unfortunately for the surfers the surf just wasn't there, so one of the surfers turned

into a diver for the rest of the day. And it was a long day. The resort even packed lunches to have out on the water. Mary didn't get back until around 3:00 pm.

Monday, 12/29/2008 – Kula Eco-Park

Pete is almost ready for diving but still has some sinus pressure, so we decide to a land based activity. Before getting to Fiji, we recorded a TV show of Jack Hannah's in which he went to an Eco-Park on Viti Levu (the island in Fiji where we are staying). It's about an hour away, but it's an easy trip with the resorts shuttle van. We spent about 2 hours exploring the park; feeding the turtles, taking pictures with iguanas & the baby boa, and took lots of pictures of the parks birds. After exploring Kula Eco-Park, we went to the Outrigger Resort for lunch. We found the Sundowner Bar where they serve some very tasty pizza.

Tuesday, 12/30/2008 – SCUBA

Pete finally feels like diving again. We start with a nice dive at the dive site "Fantasea". There are a few nice opportunities to swim through a few short tunnels loaded with giant gorgonian fans. Between our dives we had a lovely day at the beach and enjoyed our packed lunch of sandwiches, chips and cookies. Our second dive was at a bommie that we've nicknamed "cyclone". Darryl thought that there would be some current at the bommie but thought that it wouldn't be so bad. Well we made one circle around the bommie, struggling in some places against the current & at other places the bommie shielded us from the current. On the second turn around the bommie there was just too much current. After showing Mary a large octopus, Darryl called off the dive. Back on board the boat we rested and caught our breath. After a nice long surface interval, Darryl took us to a very lovely cove where we had a nice long shallow dive. Mary spotted a green moray eel.

On the way back from the dive, we fished. Naomi pulled in the first fish, a very nice little tuna. The next fish was for Pete. It was a good sized Mahi Mahi. While it didn't fight much being reeled in, once on board they are known to put up quite a fight. So, the guys quickly put it in the cooler.

After a long day of diving we rested up for an hour or two, before we received an invite to join Darryl, David & Naomi for some skurfing. What is skurfing you ask? Well, picture surfing while being towed by a power boat... that's skurfing! David showed us how it was done, and then it was Pete's turn. Even though it's not easy, Pete made it up on the board on the first try. Then it was Naomi's turn. After a few less than successful attempts, she was up and skurfing. Well, the challenge was on for Mary. Her first few attempts looked very promising, but soon fatigue in her arms made her call it quits for a rest. Darryl took his turn and showed that he's done this many times. Back through the rotation, David had a good long run, as did Pete. Naomi didn't want to risk it again based on her most recent success, so it was Mary's turn again. After three attempts, Mary was still not able to stand on the board, but she was able to swallow excessive amounts of sea water, so she called it quits.

Wednesday, 12/31/2008 – SCUBA

Another day of diving in paradise! Today is another shark dive for us. And again the Tiger Shark does not make an appearance. The visibility today is not as good as it was on the 24th, so the pictures aren't as clear. But it still was a fun dive. Pete had fun playing guitar with another one of the guests, Ilan from Belgium, for a couple hours in the afternoon.

Tonight was a fun New Years Eve party. There was great food, singing, dancing, fireworks & just good fun. Again some of the neighbors joined us. It didn't end until 4:00 am.

Thursday, 1/1/2009 – Last day at Waidroka and return home to ATL

Thankfully we were able to arrange a late checkout. Everyone slept in late and had a very late breakfast. After breakfast, Mary napped while Pete read until lunch. For lunch today we had freshly

caught Mahi Mahi (the one Pete pulled in). It was very tasty. After lunch we didn't have much time to pack up & catch our 3:30 pm transport to the airport. The van that came to pick us up was in bad shape and had a breakdown on the way. So, we spent about an hour waiting for another van to get us to the airport. Just before the airport we stopped at a temple for a quick picture. Just wish we had gotten there when there was better sunlight, it was nearly dark when we got there. We had a short wait for checking into Air Pacific (they don't open until about 2 ½ hours before the flight). Our flights & connections went smoothly, and we got back home around 2:00 am Friday morning.

Notes:

We had a great time at Waidroka Bay Resort. The staff (Julie, Darryl, Cap, Lo, and all the others) made the trip awesome. If Darryl & Julie leave Waidroka to run another resort elsewhere in the world, we hope they'll let us know so that we can enjoy their hospitality in a different location on another vacation.

Food at Waidroka was always good; although some of the dinners had too small of portions, especially for the male guests. The food was always fresh, especially the fish dishes (Mary has to find the banana batter recipe for the fish & chips. And also, she has to figure out how to make banana pancakes). The Christmas dinner was exceptional.

The diving was very nice. Although, Darryl continued to comment that the visibility during our week was less than normal, perhaps due to coral spawning or rain runoff. So, we can only imagine what it must be like when conditions are perfect.

All the Fijians we met were very friendly & welcoming. Our travel agent specifically told us that Fijians are not accustomed to the Western style of tipping for service; all the Fijians that we met were quite comfortable receiving tips (and even to some degree expect it).

Everyone asks about the flight. It really wasn't too bad. Air Pacific provides even their coach passengers (us) a pillow & a blanket. They also provide a night kit with socks, eye mask, disposable tooth brush, and a tiny tube of tooth paste. And they provide two hot meals; a breakfast & dinner. We ate the breakfast on both flights but somehow skipped dinner both times. The seats were OK; not any excess leg room & not well padded, but not horrible either. Pete used his pillow as a cushion.