

# Tondelayo's Voyage

## Tonga – Bars, Boats, and Beautiful Anchorages

Aug 5 – Aug 14, 2003

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Aug 5 – A 2 day sail to Tonga that took 3 days because we crossed the International Date Line. Anyway, it was a beautiful sail, with nice wind, reasonable seas, and the best part... Good fishing. We caught 2 nice Mahi Mahi the morning we arrived in Tonga.

We were sailing in company with Manu Tara, Hoonah, and DeJaVu.

Left: 2-Mahi Mahi (42") Click to see the beautiful finished fillets!

Aug 8 Arrived in Vava'u, Tonga!!! We sailed most of the way around the top of Vava'u Island and then motored the last hour and tied up to the Customs wharf. After many attempts to call customs, we finally decided to go looking for them. Apparently, on Friday, they do not come out to the boat, too much work! After finding all the offices and getting all our stamps, we were on our way to find an anchorage. There were hundreds of moorings on the way and most seem to be filled, but we did eventually find a nice spot to anchor, and headed ashore to Mermaids, a classic cruiser bar. Dingy Dock, \$1.25 beers for happy hour, music, and all the usual characters. Philo from Cherokee Spirit (and Philo's Bar – Puerto Vallarta) was playing! Small world. After a few beers, we went over to the annual "Miss Cosmos" pageant – the Transvestite beauty pageant. All in all, good fun. We then retired to the boat for some sleep after all the events of the day.

Aug 9 Saturday, so everything is open for half the day. We headed for the internet cafe, bank, market, and just checked out a bit of town. After running all the errands we decided to go and find an anchorage out of town. We headed to Port Maurelle (an anchorage) and found about half a dozen boats there as well, including our friends on Meredith. Went for a quick snorkel (saw a banded sea snake – cool), and then had the usual festivities on the boat that evening, but in a perfectly flat, flat, flat anchorage.



Aug 10 A bit of work in the morning, including popping on a new zinc for Meredith, followed by more snorkeling after lunch. Found a bunch of large spider conchs, and picked up a pretty nice one. Went over to Meredith for dinner and drinks with Michael and Annie, and their guests Michael's daughter's family. 9 people in total. An excellent time of course, as Meredith is always the most splendid of hosts. We stayed up till almost midnight!!! Amazing!

Aug 11 Headed for a new anchorage. The first one or 2 that we planned were a bit exposed since the wind had shifted a bit, so we continued on to one known as Blue Lagoon. A beautiful anchorage, and we were immediately snorkeling. Each of us came up with a few nice looking cowry shells, and saw lots of all the usual fish, coral, and stuff. That night was a bit roly as the tide came up and a bit of swell slopped over the reef.

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Aug 12 Got up for some shelling on the beach, and found a few more of the ever sought after cowries. Then pulled the hook and dropped by Mariner's Cave on our way to the next anchorage. This is cool. You swim into the cave through an underwater passage, about 8 feet deep and 12 feet long and arrive into a cave lit by the bluish light filtering in through the water. The cave is fairly small and totally sealed, so as the swell rolls in the air pressure changes in the cave. Your ears pop, and the room fills with fog as the swell rolls out. the next swell comes in, and you ears pop again, and the air instantly clears. Bizarre. The cave itself is barely visible, but the pool of water is almost glowing because of the way the light filters in. Anyway, very cool.

Afterward we headed over to Anchorage #7, aka Mala Island. Of course, immediately went snorkeling, and found a few large (4") tiger cowries, and saw tons of fish. Really incredible snorkeling with all the fish and coral. On our way back we were invited over to a boat that had just come in and anchored. She is junk rigged, and beautifully finished inside. Anyway, after dinner (Devon's Lamb Curry) we headed over for cake and custard. Met the family, some excellent Canadian's, eh. They had been sailing since 99 with some interruption, like a year spent in Penrhyn Atoll, in the northern Cook's. Fascinating stuff.

Aug 13 Work in the morning, snorkeling at midday, heading back to town in the afternoon, and dinner in town.

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