

island escape

# River Rafting

on the Lunga

*Driving towards town from Honiara's Henderson airport, visitors soon pass the first bridge, leading over the Lunga River. The river, curling in endless turns towards the Pacific Ocean surely is a beautiful sight, but quickly leaving it behind, you definitely miss out on how much fun there is to be experienced in the Lunga. By Elio Stamm.*

To truly experience the river, you have to get in to it. The best way to do that is to use a floating device. Having patience, a local guide and the willingness to deal with the unexpected, you could give it a go on your own. The easier way though is to contact Anita Emmett of Ko Kama Rafting Adventures. Having been living in Solomon Islands since 1996, this Australian started to offer river rafting daytrips to the Lunga River about a year ago. The best day to go is Sunday, but groups can make individual arrangements.

Anita takes care of everything. For our group of seven she provided five fancy looking blue rafts, each included a cooler box full of sandwiches, juices and fruits and two wooden paddles. All we had to do was show up at 8am at the Honiara Golf Club, and bring along loads of sunscreen. In two Hilux pick-up trucks – anything less robust is not a good choice – we were driven over Mount Austen, the hill behind Honiara, down to the starting point. This journey alone was impressive, and not just because of the metre-deep pot holes. On top of Mount Austen we made a stop and by walking 20 metres reached a lookout point with an incredible view of the Guadalcanal plain, the airport and the turns of the Lunga River.

At the river, Anita's team – herself and two local guides – quickly inflated the rafts and the water adventure started. We were two men in a raft, but after half an hour one of the boats

touched some sharp rock, we had to deflate it and let the two sinking captains join other rafts. The rafting itself is not as much of an adventure as this episode may make it seem. There are some rapids, and when there has been a lot of rain, it might get a bit tricky, but most of the time the rafts are swiftly floating over flat water, giving passengers time to observe what is going on either side of the river. And this is where the rafting day trip really shines.

You float down lush bush environments that are only interrupted by some grassy, treeless hills. As you come closer to Honiara, the shores of the river are full of people washing dishes and themselves, while kids are playing in the current. When you finally get out of the water exactly where the Kukum Highway crosses the Lunga, you will most likely see people washing their cars in the shallow waters around the bridge. You will take some sore muscles home from constantly trying to paddle back to the current, but also impressions of beautiful nature and the special lifestyle of Solomon Islands – especially if you bring your waterproof camera along.

**River Rafting on the Lunga River in Honiara, Solomon Islands: SBD700, 8am to around 4pm on Sunday (depending on the water level), for bookings call Anita Emmett of Ko Kama Rafting Adventures on +677 749 47 77 or email: [aemmett04@gmail.com](mailto:aemmett04@gmail.com).** 🌴

PICTURES: Elio Stamm



The rafting may be relatively easy, but the views and glimpses of Solomon Islander living is unforgettable.

