

Cool down in stunning waterfalls

Are you tired of the crust of salt on your skin when you leave the sea? Elio Stamm says go for the alternative water refreshment that Guadalcanal has to offer, the waterfalls.

The hilly terrain combined with the wet climate has shaped some truly spectacular ways for water to make its way down to the Pacific Ocean. This means visitors to the following three waterfalls around Honiara get to enjoy the journey and the destination, including a cooling dip in the water at the base of the falls, which is much more refreshing than the 30 degree water in the sea.

Mataniko: The Mataniko Falls are the favourite waterfall adventure for most expats living in Honiara, and not without reason. The trip, which takes approximately three to five hours, depending on how fast you choose to walk, is stunning from the start until the end. Start at Leilei village behind China town, and then make your way up a steep, treeless hill. The effort is rewarded with a stunning view of Henderson airfield and the Guadalcanal plains. The trail continues over less challenging grassy hills until it finally descends down to the Mataniko river through a slippery jungle section. You enter the river just a few metres below the actual falls and can conquer them by climbing up the rocks over which the water cascades down. They are less slippery than they appear. If you are adventurous and have a flashlight, you also have the chance to enter caves in the area, before you float down the river all the way back to Leilei village.

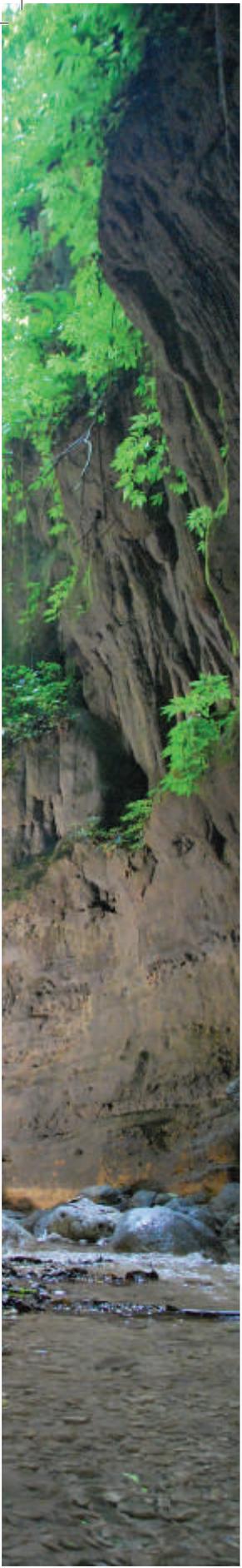
Tenaru: The Tenaru Falls are ideal for people for whom Mataniko Falls are too much of a physical challenge. Plan more than half a day for your trip, as entry to the trail is about a 40-minute drive from Honiara, behind the

Tenaru village, past the airport. Walking in and out of the Tenaru Falls over the same trail takes about four hours. The path is flat and shady all the way, following the river and crossing it several times. While the trek to the falls is less adventurous than at the Mataniko, you still wander through beautiful jungle environments, and the 63-metre high falls themselves are definitely way higher and more spectacular. There is a huge pool below for you to take a swim and feel the energy of the water rushing down the falls.

Kakabona: The least known of the three waterfalls lies behind Kakabona village, on the western side of Honiara. The falls are called Kahove or Trenches Creek Falls, but a lot of people refer to them as the Kakabona Falls. They have less water than the Tenaru Falls and if it has not been raining they may actually dry up. Walking up to the falls is a stunning experience nevertheless. You make your way up the stream, caught in between impressive cliffs. The sun will reach the bottom of the valley only occasionally, making you feel as though you're in a theatre spotlight. You will have to wade through the water of the stream and climb over rocks, making the two hours in and two hours out more challenging than the Tenaru Falls.

Always go with a guide. Guides can be arranged by just showing up at the starting point of the treks or at the Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau at Mendana Avenue +677 224 42 or www.visitsolomons.com.sb Car hire is available in Honiara. 🌴





These stunning waterfalls are all within reach of Honiara. Grab a guide and off you go.