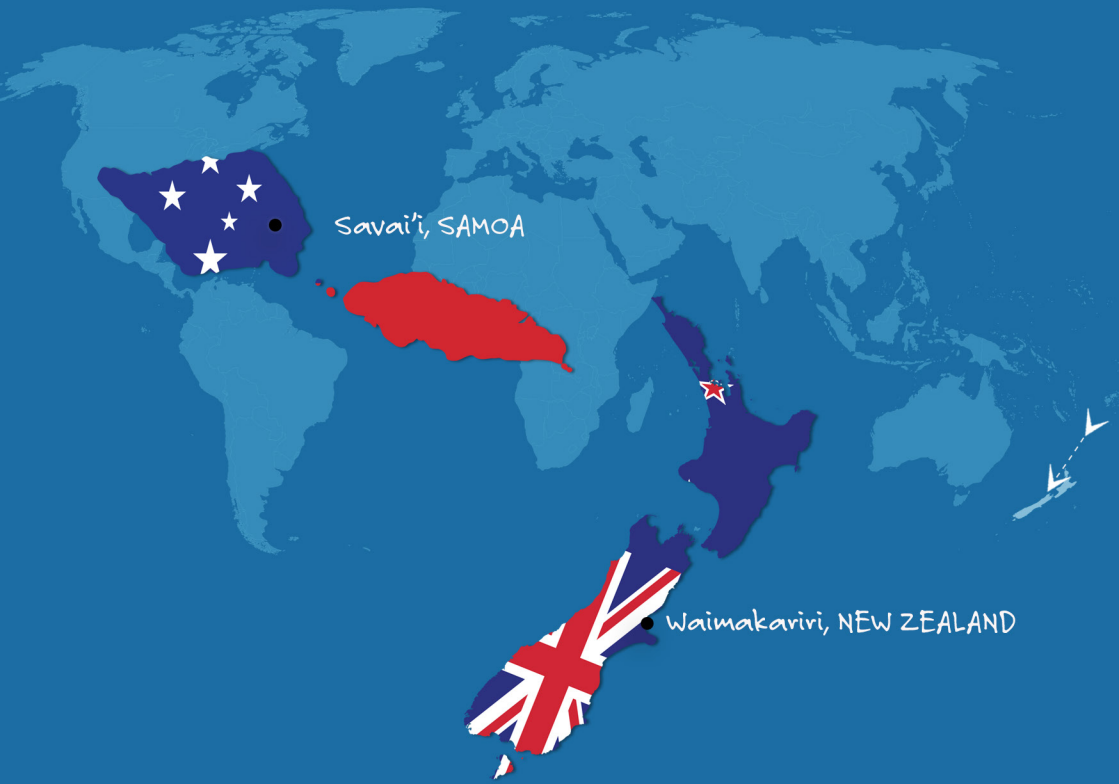


PACKING for a new life



Migrant Suitcase **Ursula Parkinson**

Malo Sa'oloto Tuto'atasi o Sāmoa,
the Independent State of Samoa to
New Zealand, year 1997

The Story

This suitcase contains clothes that I used to wear and significant items I admired when I was in Samoa. The tapa, mats and handmade wooden bowl brought back a lot of memories of my childhood. I grew up in an extended family with grandparents, aunties, uncles and cousins, all living in one fale (round shelter with open sides). My grandparents worked hard on our plantation so we can have food to survive. Even though we didn't have much, we were very happy. As family is one of the most important things in the world.

Clothes

The **puletasi** (dress) in the suitcase was made by my mother, which I am proud of. She learnt to sew so she could make our clothes. For most Samoan, family is of the utmost importance. We believe each person is a representative of their family and should act in such a way that honours all family members.

The Tapa cloth is used in traditional ceremonies in modern fashion shows. Strips of bark are soaked, scraped and beaten out on logs or special tables with tapa beaters. The beaters are made of stone or heavy wood.



Siapo is the Samoan word for a fine cloth made from the bark of the Paper Mulberry tree.

I am here as a migrant. Many Samoan travelled to New Zealand since 1900s for greater opportunities. Because Samoa is hot, most people wear polyester. It dries quickly and it doesn't stain like cotton does. Fabric plays a huge role in Samoan culture.

Religion

We have strong believes in Christianity and Sunday everyone must be in church. The high chief in the village will always make sure most of the people should be in the church except few to stay home to cook. Access to villages closes and are guarded daily during prayer time. It is a solemn ritual in which a ceremonial beverage is shared to mark important occasions in Samoan society.

The Samoan word '**ava** (pronounced with the glottal stop) is a cognate of the Polynesian word kava associated with the kava cultures in Oceania.

Of central importance in the system are the **matai**, the holders of family chief titles, and their role in looking after their family. Fa'amatai is the key socio-political system of governance and way of life (fa'a Samoa).



The Samoan tattoo, or ‘tatau’ as it is known traditionally, is deeply tied into the culture of Samoa. It is done as a source of pride in their heritage and culture. To be offered the chance to be tattooed for Samoan men is a very high honour.

Today, **puleitasi** is used as female full dress. Most commonly worn to church and formal Samoan culture events. The puleitasi is the traditional Samoan dress for not only girls, but older women as well. It is a two-piece dress with a skirt and a top, and it is usually worn to cultural events, church, and to any formal event. In recent years, different styles and improvisations have been added.

Music

Most Samoan people create their own music. I remember as a teenager we used to use Tins and rolled up mats and beat them with sticks to create our own rhythm and sounds. Samoan people always love singing.

Food

My favourite food is palusami (coconut milk baked in taro leaves) we sit down on the floor with our legs folded to eat our meals. We serve elders first and then our turn. We eat together as a family and enjoy each other's company.



The plantations of bananas, breadfruit, taro, tropical fruits and vegetables picked each day for Samoan meals. Palusami (young taro leaves baked in coconut cream) and oka, (raw fish in coconut cream), both are Samoan traditional food.

Samoa is an enchanting nation that is brimming with culture history and tradition.

Country and its history

Malo Sa'oloto Tuto'atasi o Sāmoa, the Independent State of Samoa is a country consisting of two main islands, Savai'i and Upolu, and four smaller islands. Samoa lies south of the equator, about halfway between Hawaii and New Zealand, in the Polynesian region of the Pacific Ocean. The total land area is 2,842 km², consisting of the two large islands of Upolu and Savai'i (which together account for 99% of the total land area) and eight small islets with a population of 194,320. The capital and largest city is Apia. Samoan and English are the official languages.

The Samoans originated from Austronesian predecessors during the terminal eastward Lapita expansion period from Southeast Asia and Melanesia between 3,000 and 1,500 BC. The Fa'a Samoa culture is over 3000 years old and Samoan mythology and legend say they descended

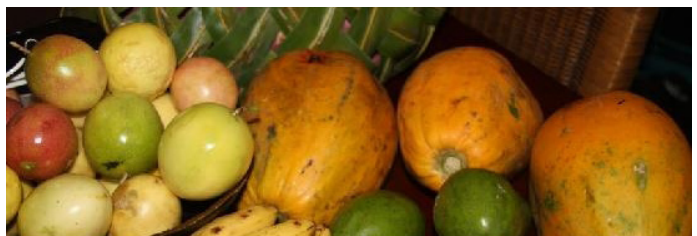


The flag with the white stars of the Southern Cross was adopted 1st January 1962. The blue represent freedom; red is courage, as well as being a traditional Samoan colour.

Samoa

Australia

from the Gods and heaven to inhabit these islands. Samoa's oldest known site of human occupation is Mulifanua on the island of Upolu, which dates back to about 1000 BC (about 3000 years ago). Stonework 'pyramids' and mounds in star formation found throughout the islands have inspired various theories from archaeologists about this stage of Samoan history.



Over the millennia, the Samoan people engaged in trade, battles and intermarriage of nobility with the neighbouring islands of Fiji and Tonga.

The interweaving of the cultures and bloodlines has helped strengthen the ties of these South Pacific nations. Contact with Europeans began in 1722 with a Dutchman explorer, Jacob Roggeveen followed by a French one, de Bougainville in 1768 and English missionaries, Americans and Germans traders. In 1830 the Reverend John Williams arrived in Savaii, that the Christian gospel had an impact on Samoan life. In 1900, the eastern island-group became a territory of the USA known as American Samoa and the western islands became German Samoa until the WW1.



From 1918 until 1962, year of the independence, New Zealand controlled Samoa. From 1962 to 1997, the nation was known as Western Samoa, until it dropped the title 'Western' from its name to become the Independent State of Samoa. Samoa celebrates its independence each June. In June 2017, passed changing the country's constitution was changed to include a reference to the Trinity. The economy of Samoa was dependent on agriculture and fishing at the local level but in modern times, development aid, private family remittances from overseas, and agricultural exports have become key factors in the nation's economy.

This Suitcase exhibit is prepared by Ursula Parkinson



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