# National Park of American Samoa

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

# Trip Planner

## *Explore the Islands of Sacred Earth*

**Talofa (Hello)!** The National Park Service welcomes you into the heart of the South Pacific, to a world of sights, sounds, and experiences that you will find in no other national park in the United States. Located some 2,600 miles southwest of Hawai'i, this is one of the most remote and newest national park's in the United States.

You will not find the usual facilities of most national parks. Instead, with a bit of the explorer's spirit, you will discover secluded villages, rare plants and animals, coral sand beaches, and vistas of land and sea. The national park includes sections of three islands—Tutuila, Ta'u, and Ofu. Almost all the land area of these volcanic islands—from the mountaintops to the coast—is rainforest. About 4,000 acres of the national park is underwater, offshore from all three islands.

Enjoy this unique national park in the heart of the South Pacific and the welcoming people of American Samoa. We are here to protect its rich culture and natural resources. Come explore them with us!

### TROPICAL RAINFOREST

From the mountaintops to the ocean's edge, the islands are covered with mixed-species, paleotropical rainforests. In mixed-species forests, no single tree or plant species dominates. This is the only rainforest of its kind in a United States national park. About 9,500 acres of tropical rainforest are protected here.

### WILDLIFE

Bats are the only native mammals found in American Samoa. The two species of fruit bat and one insect-eating bat species are harmless to people. They play an essential role in the tropical rainforest by pollinating plants and dispersing seeds. There are also over 35 species of native birds that make their homes in the national park.

### CORAL REEFS

Each island of American Samoa supports a coral reef ecosystem in its coastal waters. These coral reefs support a variety of marine life typical of tropical Indo-Pacific waters. To date, over 950 species of fish and over 250 species of coral have been documented.

## Table of Contents


- General Information ..... 2
- Visitor Centers and Park Store ..... 4
- Homestay Programs ..... 5
- Day Hikes ..... 7
- Maps ..... 8


## Contact Information


**National Park of American Samoa**
Pago Pago, AS 96799
684-633-7082, ext 22
npsa_info@nps.gov
www.nps.gov/npsa


EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

# General Information

## Getting Around

Several car rental agencies are available near the airport. On the island of Tutuila, taxis are available at the airport and throughout the island.

Local "aiga" or family" buses are available (frequent, but unscheduled). For 50 cents to two dollars, you can be driven around Pago Pago Harbor and to the more remote parts of the island. Buses originate and terminate at the market in Fagatogo, the village next to Pago Pago. Buses do not run on Sundays. You can wave buses to stop or be dropped off anywhere they can safely pull off of the road.

There are no buses or taxis on the islands of Ta'u, Ofu, or Olosega.

## Fees and Reservations

No fees or reservations are required to visit the park.

## The Park is Open

The National Park of American Samoa is open 24-hours per day, year round, including holidays. The visitor center is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, closed on weekends and federal holidays.

## Accessibility

One scenic overlook (Lower Sauma Ridge) is accessible with assistance. No other pullouts or overlooks have been developed at this time and trails are unimproved, steep, and rugged. Keep in mind that the territory is underdeveloped for accessibility as well. Travel around the island may be challenging at times.

View from the summit of Mount 'Alava.

## Weather and Climate

American Samoa is in the South Pacific Ocean, between the Equator and the Tropic of Capricorn. A tropical climate prevails. Temperatures are warm or hot year-round with high humidity. Rain showers are frequent and can last only for a few minutes or all day. The average annual rainfall is 125 inches in the dryer areas to as much as 300 inches in the highest mountains. Tropical storms are more prevalent during the rainy season (November–May).

Warm, humid and rainy year-round, but there is a long, wet summer season (October–May) and a slightly cooler and drier season (June–September).

| Month | High °F \| °C | Low °F \| °C | Precip. in \| cm |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jan | 87 \| 31 | 75 \| 24 | 11 \| 30 |
| Feb | 87 \| 31 | 75 \| 24 | 13 \| 34 |
| Mar | 87 \| 31 | 73 \| 23 | 12 \| 32 |
| April | 86 \| 30 | 75 \| 24 | 13 \| 34 |
| May | 86 \| 30 | 75 \| 24 | 10 \| 26 |
| June | 84 \| 29 | 75 \| 24 | 9 \| 24 |
| July | 84 \| 29 | 73 \| 23 | 7 \| 19 |
| Aug | 82 \| 28 | 73 \| 23 | 8 \| 20 |
| Sept | 84 \| 29 | 73 \| 23 | 5 \| 14 |
| Oct | 84 \| 29 | 75 \| 24 | 12 \| 32 |
| Nov | 86 \| 30 | 75 \| 24 | 9 \| 25 |
| Dec | 86 \| 30 | 75 \| 24 | 14 \| 36 |

## Safety and Precautions

- Solar radiation is intense!
- Wear sunglasses, sunscreen, a hat, and protective clothing.
- Carry insect repellent.
- Always snorkel with a partner.
- While on beach areas, watch for falling coconuts.
- Whatever beach you are on, be aware of the tidal movements and be alert for dangerous avas—tidal outflows from the reef. Their currents and undertows should not be underestimated.
- Coral rubble beaches are difficult to walk on—watch your step. Rocky areas can be slippery.
- Ask the visitor center about trail conditions.
- Never hike without water; carry 2 to 3 liters per person.
- Don't touch the coral! Cuts from coral take a long time to heal.
- Beware of dogs! People do get bitten.
- Medical treatment is available on Tutuila.

*Note: There are few health risks of concern for normally healthy people visiting the islands. Bring necessary medications with you. Medical care is limited (even more limited on the Manu'a Islands).*

## Travels to Manu'a

Getting to the Manu'a Islands (Ta'u, Ofu, and Olosega) can be challenging due to limited and sometimes unreliable transportation. Currently Inter Island Airways is the only carrier to the Manu'a Islands and only to Ta'u. For more information call 684-699-5700.

Occasionally a local ferry travels to the Manu'a Islands and takes about 6–8 hours depending on weather conditions.

Transportation to the other park area on Ofu Island is by local fisherman's boats from Ta'u.

# General Information

## Fa'asamoa—The Samoan Way

The Samoan culture is Polynesia's oldest. It is believed that the first people on the Samoan Islands came by sea from southwest Asia about 3,000 years ago. Over the centuries, distinct cultural traits emerged that we now call *fa'asamoa* (fah-ah-SAH-mo-ah). Whether you are a guest or simply passing through a village, please observe these customs as a sign of respect.

Follow the Samoan Way:

- Always ask villagers for permission before taking photographs, using the beach, or engaging in other activities, however unobtrusive your actions may seem. Permission will almost certainly be granted.
- Sunday is the day for church, for rest, and especially for quiet around the villages. Activities that are acceptable on other days, such as swimming, may not be permitted on Sunday.

**Paramount Chief of Ofu, Manu'a performs while in full traditional attire. The headpiece is called the "tuiga" which is accompanied by the boar's teeth necklace and an ie toga (fine mat) with siapo (tapa) sash around the waist.**

- In a traditional home, called a *fale* (fah-LAY), sit down on the floor before talking, eating, or drinking. Cross your legs or pull a mat over them; it is impolite to stretch out your legs uncovered.

- Each evening around dusk, villagers observe a time for prayers called *Sā*. If you are entering a village during *Sā*, stop and wait quietly until *Sā* ends. You may even be invited to join in a family prayer. It is not necessary to stop for *Sā* on the main roads.
- It is considered an honor to be asked to share ava (a local drink made from the root of the pepper plant). To show respect, spill a few drops on the ground or mat in front of you, then raise your cup and say "*manuia*" (mahn-WE-ah) before drinking.

- Do not eat or drink while walking through a village.

## Other Services

**PAGO PAGO HARBOR AREA**

The following services are available :

- Gasoline
- Groceries
- Banks
- Laundromat
- Hardware
- ATM
- Post Office
- Internet
- Hotels
- Restaurants
- Library

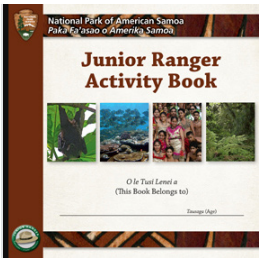
## Emergency Services

For emergencies, **call 911**.

## Junior Ranger Program

The National Park of American Samoa can be a wonderland of exploration and understanding for children of all ages. Kids visiting with their families can hike and explore (with adult supervision) any of our short trails or beautiful beaches. Learning about the Samoan culture can also be a unique opportunity for children. Students and youth groups are often involved in field trips in the park. Sometimes lead by group leaders, but often by park rangers, these students learn about the terrestrial, marine and cultural resources preserved in the park.

**JUNIOR RANGER ACTIVITY BOOK**




The free *Junior Ranger Activity Book* is a great way to have fun and learn about the National Park of American Samoa and the National Park Service.

When you finish, mail your activity book to the national park. We'll check it and send your book back to you along with your certificate and badge.

**Mailing Address:**

Junior Ranger Program
National Park of American Samoa
Pago Pago, AS 96799

# *Visitor Center and Park Store*

Open on weekdays from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. Closed on weekends and federal holidays. Located in Pago Pago, past McDonald's and across from the Pago Way Service Station.

**Available Services:**

- Exhibits
- Restrooms
- Park rangers are available throughout the day to help you plan a safe and memorable visit to the national park.
- Cultural Videos
- The Hawai'i Pacific Parks Association sells books, posters, and other educational materials.

**A matai (chief) plays the pate, a wooden carved instrument, that is similar to a drum set. The pate is just as loud as the modern drum sets of today and is played during performances for cultural or religious festivities.**

**A traditional Samoan dance performed by Malaeloa village.**

## Support Your Park

The Hawai'i Pacific Parks is a National Park Service cooperating association, a non-profit organization authorized by Congress to support the interpretative, educational, scientific and historic mission of the National Park Service.

HAWAI'I PACIFIC PARKS
INSPIRE • CONNECT • PRESERVE

Proceeds from the sale of educational items in our outlets in park visitor centers are returned directly to the National Park Service to support interpretative programs, research projects, museum activities, free publications, cultural demonstrations, and other related activities.

**Contact Us:**
**Hawai'i Pacific Parks Association**
808-985-6051
www.hawaiipacificparks.org

# Homestay Program

The Homestay program provides an opportunity for visitors to become acquainted with Samoan people and culture in a village setting. Residents of villages associated with the national park offer accommodations and the opportunity to learn local customs, crafts and the south Pacific lifestyle.

Imagine staying in a village with the sights and sounds of the rainforest around you. Sleep in a Samoan house (fale), live with a Samoan family and start the day participating with village activities. Some may be familiar. Others, like cutting the Pandanus (laufala) tree leaves and drying them to weave mats, may not.

## Hosts

Each host has set the fee for accommodations and cultural activities for your Homestay visit. The cost per accommodation varies with the type of accommodation, activities, and the village you will be staying in. Do not expect it, but don't be surprised if the family gives you a gift while you are at their home as a gesture of Samoan hospitality and generosity towards visitors. It is customary to accept the gift. You too may want to participate in this age-old Samoan tradition of gift giving. Consider giving a personal belonging or unopened store-bought food.

## Details

There is the chance that you may experience disappointments. These may be due to living arrangements, unmet expectations, language difficulties or cultural differences. They may also be due to unpredictable changes in the weather. The national park is not responsible for conflicts, accidents, sickness, or the weather, and cannot be associated with any payments for accommodations and services. The national park does request suggestions from visitors that participate in this program so that we can continue to improve the program.

## Activities

Some artisans may dry and paint the bark of the Mulberry tree. Weavers use pandanas leaves to create fine mats, baskets and hats. Samoans tend plantations and gardens by clearing brush, planting taro and bananas, and tending mango, and papaya trees. Some villagers may climb coconut and breadfruit trees to gather food. You may even have a chance to fish, Samoan style. Samoans use poles and nets to fish, or walk along the reef to collect giant clams and spear octopus. At certain times of the year, villagers catch fish with palm leaves. These and other cultural experiences may be a memorable part of your visit to American Samoa.

# Day Hikes

## Tutuila Island

Matafao Peak

### EASY

**POLA ISLAND TRAIL**

This short, fairly flat trail leads to a rough and rocky beach with views of the coastline and Pola Island.

■ **Distance:** 0.1 mi / 0.2 km roundtrip

Due to unfriendly dogs, **please drive past the last house at the end of the paved road in Vatia Village**. This rough section of road will lead you to three exhibits and the trailhead.

### MODERATE

**LOWER SAUMA RIDGE TRAIL**

This interpretative trail takes you to an archelogical site of an ancient star mound. Along the trail are exhibits and spectacular views of the northeast coastline of the island and the Vai'ava Strait National Natural Landmark. Visible looking north is the tall and skinny Pola Island, a nesting area for seabirds.

■ **Distance:** 0.4 mi / 0.6 km roundtrip

**FAGATELE BAY TRAIL**

*This trail is located outside of the national park, on private land, and provides access to the Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary.*

Turtles, whales, sharks, and giant clams all find refuge in this protected area.

■ **Distance:** 1 mi / 1.6 km roundtrip

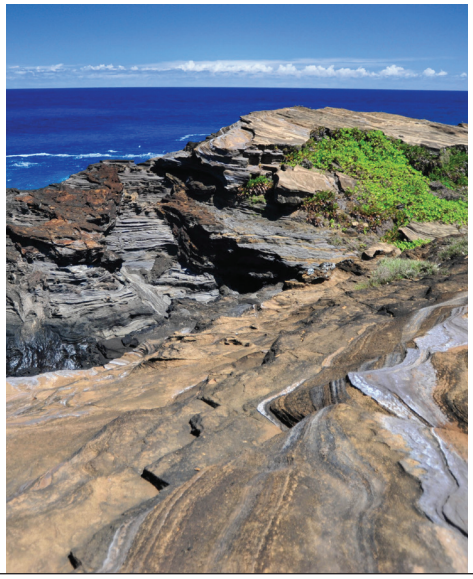
Travel west on Route 001 to Futiga Village and turn left just before the US Mart. Follow the road past the landfill until you reach a locked gate. **Ask for permission from the family at the end of the road to hike past the gate.** The family might charge a fee. Follow the trail to a small beach. For more information call 684-633-5155.

**LE'ALA SHORELINE TRAIL**

*This trail is located outside of the national park, on private land, and provides access to the Le'ala Shoreline National Natural Landmark.*

Beginning the village of Vailoatai, this trail follows the coastline through thick vegetation with periodic views of the Le'ala Shoreline. The steep trail travels in and out of ancient volcanic craters and comes to an end at the junction with the Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary Trail.

■ **Distance:** 3.2 mi / 5.2 km roundtrip



**TUAFANUA TRAIL**

Hike up switchbacks from Vatia Village through lush tropical rainforest to a hidden coastline. At the ridge-top, enjoy ocean views before a steep descent on several ladders with ropes to a quiet, rocky beach and view of Pola Island. The trailhead can be found just before the Vatia School (Mount 'Alava Elementary).

■ **Distance:** 2.2 mi / 3.5 km roundtrip

This site is closed to the public on Sunday.

**WARNING: Do not to enter the ocean at the beach due to dangerous waves and currents.**

Blunts Point

**BLUNTS AND BREAKERS POINT TRAILS**

*These trails are located outside of the national park.*

Located at the top of these points are gun batteries that protected Pago Pago Harbor after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941. They symbolize American Samoa's importance as a route from the United States to Australia and New Zealand.

**BLUNTS POINT TRAIL**

■ **Distance:** 0.6 mi / 1 km roundtrip

Located between Faga'alu and Utulei on the coast road. Look for the sign next to the IBM Laundromat marking the path to this site. Park at the public parking lot on the harbor side, 100 yards from the trailhead. When the trail reaches the water tank, continue past it on the left.

# Day Hikes

### BREAKERS POINT TRAIL

■ **Distance:** 0.3 mi / 0.5 km roundtrip

From Pago Pago, drive toward Aua on Route 001. Continue 1.1 miles / 1.8 km past the intersection with Route 006 in Aua to a sign on the left marking the trailhead next to a house. Park at the private house without blocking driveway access. **Ask for permission from the house owner to hike the trail.** This site is closed to the public on Sunday.

## CHALLENGING

### MOUNT 'ALAVA TRAIL

Enjoy hiking through a tropical Samoan rainforest with fruit bats and many types of birds. Along the trail you'll see the park's efforts to remove invasive trees and plant native species. About halfway up the trail is a banana and coconut plantation. Great views of the northwest side of the island along the way lead you to panoramics of the central areas of Tutuila Island.

■ **Distance:** 7 mi / 11.3 km roundtrip

The trailhead is located at Fagasa Pass, 1.2 miles from Route 001 in Pago Pago.

### MOUNT 'ALAVA ADVENTURE TRAIL

This challenging loop trail takes you along ridgelines with views of the north and central parts of the national park and island. Hike up and down "ladders" or steps with ropes for balance. There are a total of 56 ladders and 783 steps! The trail leads to the Mount 'Alava Summit, returning down another steep section of trail to Vatia Village, and loops back along the road to the village.

■ **Distance:** 5.6 mi / 9 km roundtrip

The trail begins across the road from the national park faleo'o and trailhead for the Lower Sauma Ridge Trail.

## Manu'a Islands

*There are other trails, minimally maintained and challenging, including Luatele Crater, Laufuti Falls, and Piumafua Mountain trails. Local park guides are often available for all Manu'a trails.*

Tau (foreground); Ofu and Olosega (background)

## MODERATE

### SU'I POINT TRAIL

This trail follows an old road in the coastal forest past the culturally important Saua site to the southeast tip of Ta'u.

■ **Distance:** 5.7 mi / 9.2 km roundtrip

The trailhead is actually a continuation of the main road in Fiti'uta. As you pass the last houses, the road becomes dirt.

### OGE BEACH TRAIL

This trail traverses the shoulder between Mata'ala Ridge and Maga Point, where boobies and frigate birds are often seen. Follow the trail down slope past Maga Point to emerge at Oge, a remote, coral rubble beach that faces Ta'u. The hike continues as a beach walk to Leala Point. This trail is maintained in partnership with the village of Olosega.

■ **Distance:** 2.7 mi / 4.3 km roundtrip

The trailhead starts by the landfill where the Olosega village road ends and it continues eastward.

## CHALLENGING

### TUMU MOUNTAIN TRAIL

*This trail is located outside of the national park.*

Enjoy tropical rainforest and views from Ofu's highest point at 1,621 ft / 494 m. From the top, continue another ¼ mile on the new Tumu Mountain Trail extension to a rock outcropping on the Leolo Ridge with stunning views of three Manu'a islands and the coral lagoons in the national park.

■ **Distance:** 5.5 mi / 8.9 km roundtrip

This trail starts near the Ofu Harbor and follows an old road to the summit.

## Social Media

**TWITTER**
@PacificNPS

**FACEBOOK**
@National Park of American Aamoa

**BLOG**
@PacificIslandParks.com

Ofu beach

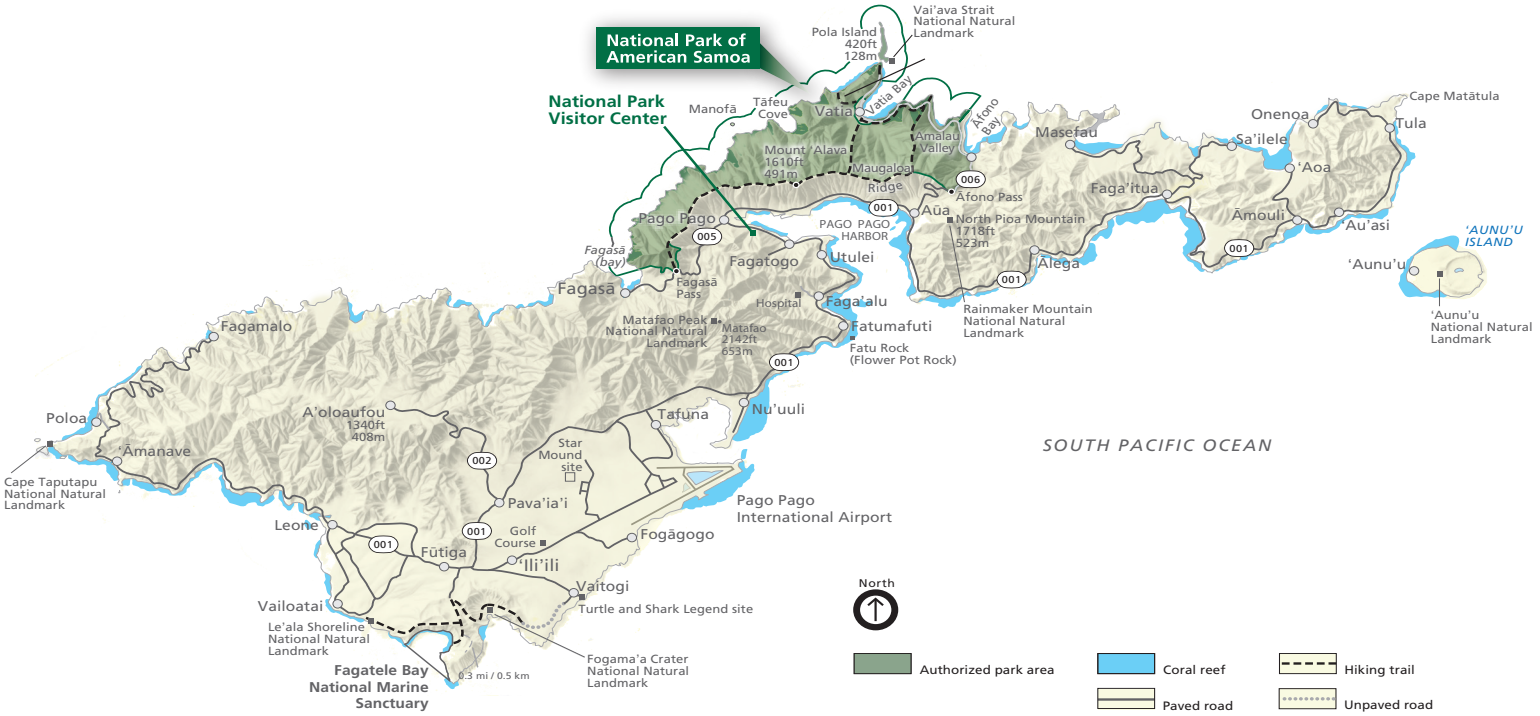
## Contact Information

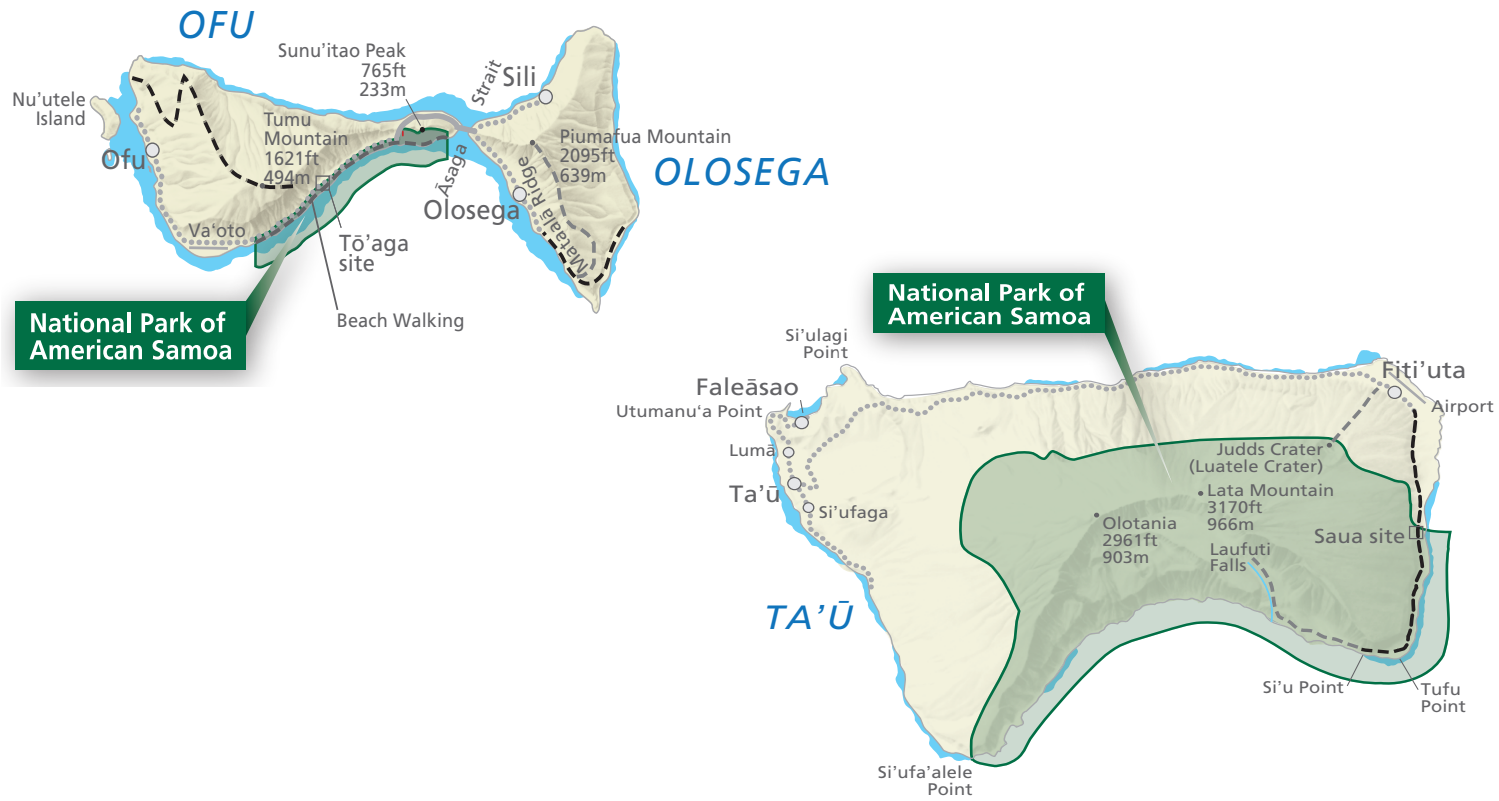
**National Park of American Samoa**
Pago Pago, AS 96799
684-633-7082, ext. 22
npsa_info@nps.gov
www.nps.gov/npsa

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

# Maps

## Tutuila Island




## Manu'a Islands