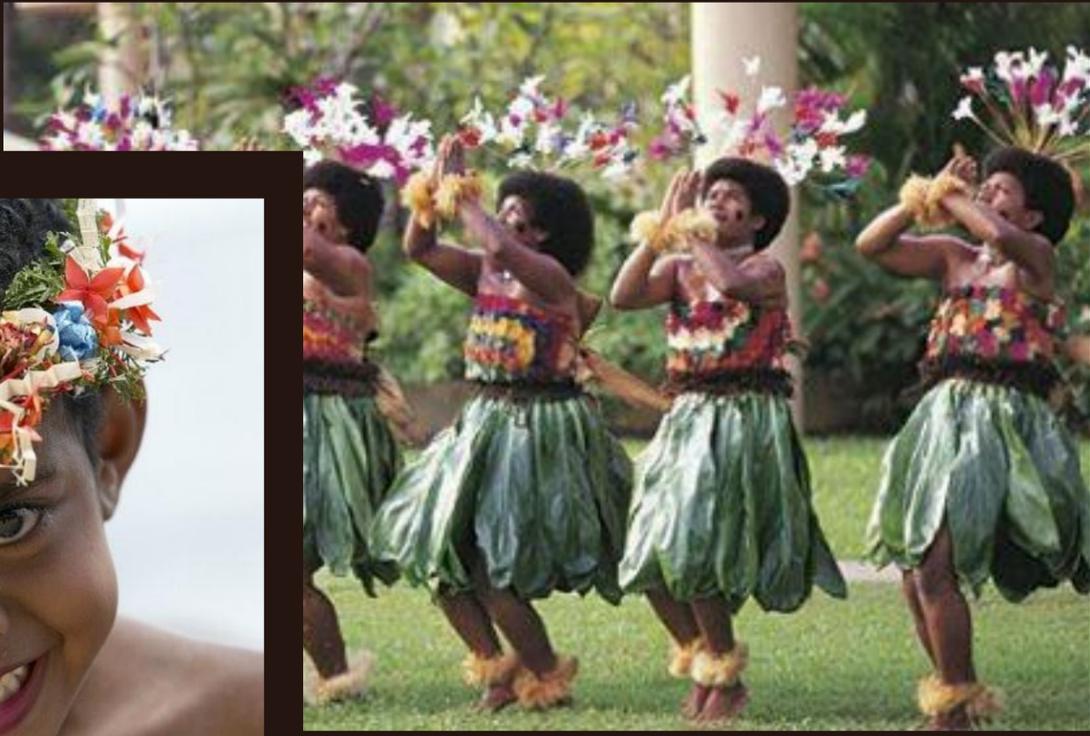
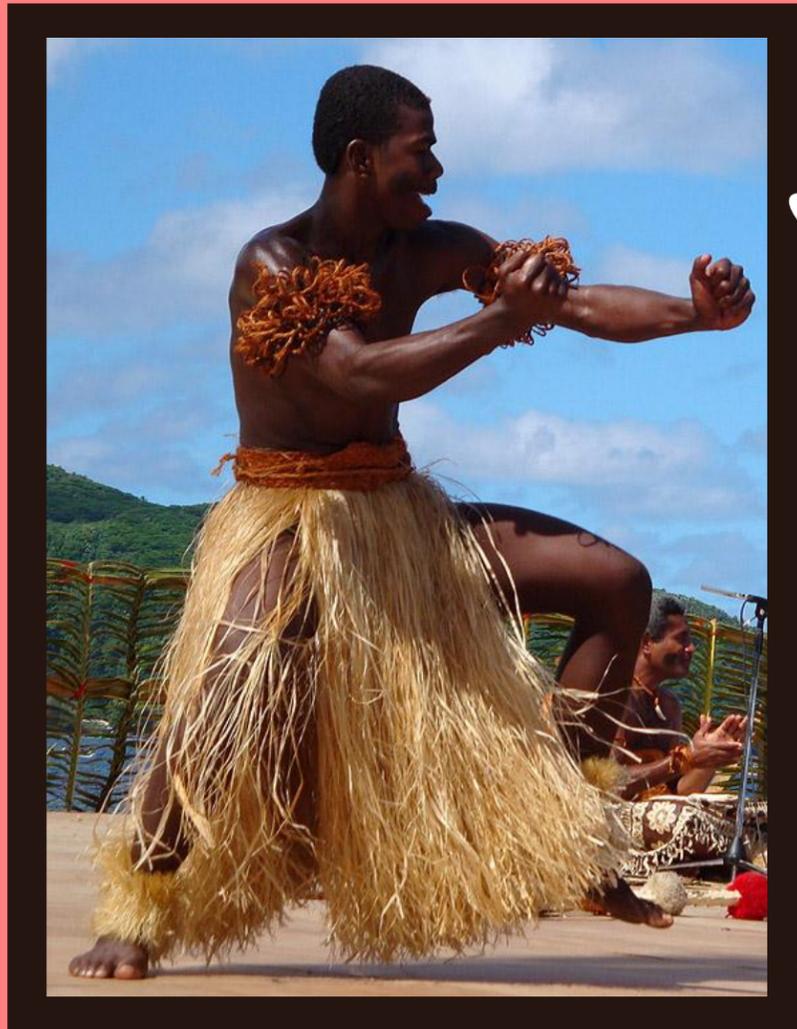


Fly Away to Fiji!



Who They Are:

Fiji is a collection of islands located in the heart of the Pacific ocean. Fijians, the indigenous inhabitants of Fiji, are Melanesians who oftentimes possess a mixture of Polynesian blood. The islands were once known as Viti, an Austronesian word meaning "east" or "sunrise." Ethnic Fijians call themselves Kai Viti ("the people of Viti") or i Taukei ("the owners of the land"). Known for their hospitality and strong emphasis on the family unit, Fijians are an admirable people!



What They Teach Us:

Life is to be Lived, Not Rushed: The concept of "Fiji Time" has proven to be both a frustrating & valuable lesson for visitors. On the islands there exists a belief that all things occur in the exact moment in which they should; therefore rushing is a pointless action. While schedules and deadlines are necessities in most of the modern world, in Fiji, they are mere variables to be followed, dismissed, or adjusted at anytime. Fiji time is more than a localized phenomenon. It's an attitude which sets a pace for life. A pace that is both peaceful & productive.

Live & Let Live: Fiji is considered the most cosmopolitan of all South Pacific nations. A land known for contrasting cultures that peacefully reside together; the Fiji Islands is home to Indo-Fijians, Pacific islanders, Chinese, and Europeans all of whom continue to practice the customs native to their homeland. Presently, Fiji has yet to establish a national identity and it may be in part due to a reluctance to encourage assimilationism. The varying cultural roots is considered more of an asset than a threat and this outlook translates into peace. Much can be gained from the study of Fijian approaches to ethnic relations.

What is Sacred is Not Subject to Free Enterprise: Tabua (the extracted tooth of a sperm whale) has a sacred significance and value in Fiji. Traditionally and in present day, it is a great honor to be accorded with a tabua; yet despite its high value and probability for profit, the item is not bought, sold or exported. Furthermore, it is an infringement of Fijian law to take a tabua out of Fiji without expressed and written permission from the Ministry of Fijian Affairs. This effort to preserve the sanctity of a Fijian tradition and cultural symbol reminds us that there is a time to cherish and a time to capitalize and the latter is never a substitute for the first.