

KØNR Guide to American Samoa

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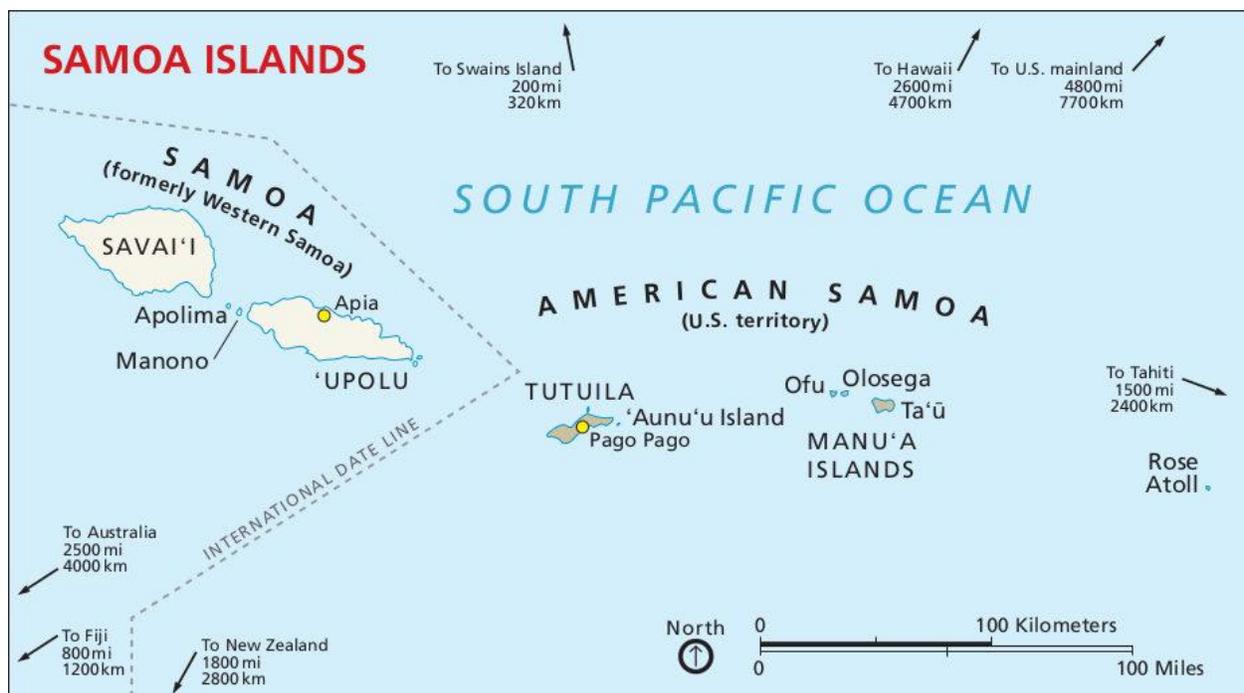
By Bob KØNR

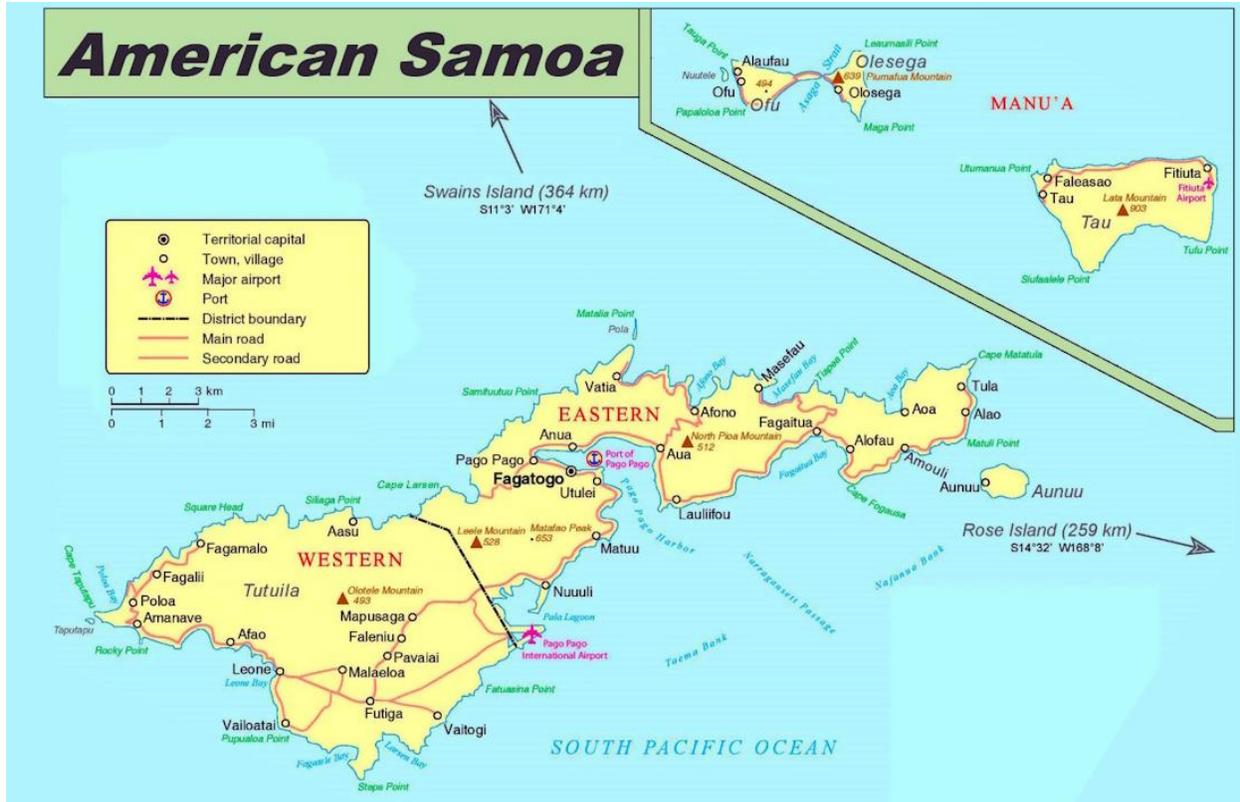
Joyce KØJJW and I traveled to KH8 American Samoa (AS) in May/June of 2025 and these are some things we learned from being there. Things can change with travel options, so there is no guarantee that this is still accurate.

Our main objective was to visit the National Park of American Samoa and to hike and snorkel while there. As a secondary objective, we added in some ham radio activity in the form of Summits On The Air (SOTA) and Parks On The Air (POTA). This framing certainly influenced the decisions we made.

See my trip report here: <https://www.k0nr.com/wordpress/2025/06/kh8-part1/>

Map of American Samoa





Immigration

American Samoa (AS) is a territory of the United States, but it has its own immigration procedures. A US citizen must go through AS immigration upon arrival. **Make sure you have your passport with you.** (You might be able to enter AS using other documentation that proves that you are a US citizen, but save yourself a ton of hassle by taking your passport.)

Resources

There are many websites and videos on the internet that provide the usual tourist information. You should check these out.

<https://www.tripsavvy.com/national-park-of-american-samoa-3361548>

<https://www.terrageria.com/blog/the-ultimate-guide-to-ofu-island-american-samoa/>

<https://www.earthtrekkers.com/best-things-to-do-in-american-samoa/>

<https://www.americansamoa.travel/ofu>

<https://farandawayadventures.com/american-samoas-best-hiking-trails/>

A good blog posting about Ofu:

<https://www.terrageria.com/blog/the-ultimate-guide-to-ofu-island-american-samoa/>

Another blog posting from the same author (QT Luong) about Tutuila

<https://www.terrageria.com/blog/visiting-the-national-park-of-american-samoa-tutuila/>

<https://www.mikahmeyer.com/post/2018/08/25/visiting-the-national-park-of-american-samoa-the-ultimate-how-to-guide>

<https://xdaysiny.com/10-days-in-American-Samoa-itinerary-guide/3>

Sadies by the Sea https://youtu.be/_WFsM1P73ZQ?si=-uusR56dRr4bKi8O

I found this book to be accurate and helpful:

<https://www.amazon.com/Explore-American-Samoa-Complete-Tutuila/dp/B092C8VBMX/>

Explore American Samoa: The Complete Guide to Tutuila, Aunu'u, and Manu'a Islands

by Melinda Clayville

Air Travel

Coming from the continental US, the only air travel option was to fly to Hawaii and then take a Hawaiian Airlines flight from Honolulu (HNL) to Pago Pago (PPG) in American Samoa. This ~6 hour flight occurs only two or three times per week (currently Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays). Book this well in advance, as these flights do fill up.

Lodging

On the main island of Tutuila, the two hotel options are Tradewinds Hotel and Sadies By The Sea. We stayed at Tradewinds (<https://tradewinds.as/>) and were happy with the experience. It is a bit dated and worn around the edges but the staff were very helpful and we liked it just fine. We heard bad reports from US travelers that we met concerning Sadies (<https://sadieshotels.com/sadies-by-the-sea/>), but your mileage may vary. Tradewinds is located close to the airport, while Sadies is about 30 minutes away, towards the east side of the island. Sadies is right on the water, which is one of its advantages.

Rental Car

A rental car is the way to get around the island and we rented one from Tradewinds Hotel. There are other options on the island, including Avis.

Travel Tips

Your mobile phone provider likely treats AS as outside of the US. Enabling “international roaming” for AS may provide mobile coverage under your existing plan. However, the international rates can be very high. Check with your mobile wireless provider.

You can sign up with BlueSky, a local mobile phone provider, by purchasing a “visitor SIM card.” This will usually be much less expensive than using your existing mobile plan. We did not do this.

Many businesses are closed on Sunday.

Some businesses do not accept credit cards, so carry plenty of cash.

There are two seasons you need to be aware of: the dry season (May to October) and the wet season (November to April). For hiking summits, you will probably want to avoid the wet season. However, you should still expect to encounter muddy trails.

National Park of American Samoa

The national park website can provide an overview of the park:

<https://www.nps.gov/npsa/index.htm>

For POTA, the park designator is AS-0001, easy to remember.

<https://pota.app/#/park/AS-0001>

A US amateur radio license is valid for operating in American Samoa (KH8). You can operate using your normal callsign but we decided to add the KH8 prefix to indicate the special location (and a different DXCC entity). So we used KH8/K0NR and KH8/K0JJW.

Summits On The Air

The SOTA information, including the Association Reference Manual, is here:

<https://www.sotadata.org.uk/en/association/KH8>

There are 11 SOTA summits in KH8. Many of these are not accessible due to rugged terrain and jungle terrain. The most accessible summits are listed below. See the SOTA database for more information. In all cases, assume the trail condition can change and inquire locally for the latest information.

Tutuila Island

Olotele Mountain – drive up

Olotele Mountain is a developed radio site with multiple towers on it. There is a single-lane paved road to the top, making this a drive-up summit. This is the easiest summit in American Samoa. It is NOT in the national park.

<https://www.sotadata.org.uk/en/summit/KH8/TI-004>

Mount Alava – 3.9 miles one-way, 1300 vertical feet, in the national park.

This is a well-known summit and hiking trail, promoted by the national park. The trailhead is relatively well-marked, starting at Fagosa Pass.

<https://www.sotadata.org.uk/en/summit/KH8/TI-003>

Matafao Peak – steep trail, 1500 vertical, 1.5 miles one way

Highest summit on Tutuila. There are widely varying reports on whether the trail to the summit is hike able.

<https://www.sotadata.org.uk/en/summit/KH8/TI-001>

Ofu Island

Tumu Mountain – 3 miles one-way to the summit with 1500 feet of elevation gain. This trail used to be a road, generally wide but overgrown in spots, rope assist in one spot.

<https://www.sotadata.org.uk/en/summit/KH8/MI-003>

<https://www.alltrails.com/trail/american-samoa/ofu-olosega/tumu-mountain-trail>

Islands on the Air (IOTA)

Here are the Islands On The Air designators for KH8:

AMERICAN SAMOA

OC-045 KH8 TUTUILA ISLAND (=Tutuila)

OC-077 KH8 MANUA ISLANDS (= Manua Isls [namely Ofu, Olosega, Tau])

OC-190 KH8 ROSE ATOLL (=Rose)

Ofu Island

Traveling to Ofu was wonderful but it is a key decision to make. It is not easy to get to and will add more days to your trip. Flights (Samoa Airways) from Pago to Ofu are limited, currently twice per week. <https://samoairways.com/>

Lodging on Ofu is limited. We stayed at Vaoto Lodge, which is very basic and you have to make your own meals. They do not have a website and are sometimes difficult to contact. Email worked best for us: vaotolodge@gmail.com

Trip report from 2017

<https://www.panamintcity.com/americansamoa/ofubeach.html>

Trip report from 2020

<https://xdaysiny.com/ofu-beach-american-samoa/>

More recent info on Ofu

<https://www.terragalleria.com/blog/the-ultimate-guide-to-ofu-island-american-samoa/>