

small island - big heart

ATAÚRO



TIMOR-LESTE





Welcome



Ataúro is a new eco-tourism destination and much cherished by us, the people who live there. With rugged mountains, forests and grassy slopes, the coastline varies from overhanging cliffs to the most sublime beaches. Our Island is surrounded by reefs rich in marine life and crystal clear turquoise waters.

to Ataúro



Ataúro is Timor-Leste's untouched eco-tourism gem

Located enticingly close to Dili, Ataúro Island rewards those who visit. It is wonderfully relaxing. There is excellent swimming, snorkeling, diving and fishing. The hills and coastline offer great trekking. Ataúro is an extremely welcoming, friendly and hospitable place.

For those visitors who value a beautiful natural environment and are interested in our culture and gaining insights into our way of life, Ataúro offers a very special experience - something authentic.



WONDERFULLY RELAXING

Lying in a shaded hammock being fanned by a tropical breeze is blissful. No more so than if you are beside a beach listening to the gentle lapping of the waves. Ataúro is so very relaxing. Sometimes flopping into the water for a swim, going for a beach wander or turning the page on a book can just seem like too much effort.





GO EXPLORING

If you want to be more energetic, to discover and see something new, Ataúro has many options. These can be organized directly with tourism operators or via accommodation.

Diving & Snorkeling

Nestled in the famous coral triangle, Ataúro reefs offer pristine dive and snorkel sites with a dazzling diversity of marine life - colorful hard and soft corals as well as a vivid array of reef fish. Reaching spectacular drop-offs usually requires only a short boat ride or swim from the beach. Open water fish species can be seen along with sharks, manta rays, turtles, and the more elusive dugongs. Our warm tropical waters provide great visibility all year around.

Dive Operators:

All Dili based diving companies offer Ataúro adventures. Compass Charters also operates the specialist Adara Eco-Safari Camp.

Aquatica Dive Resort

Tel (+670) 7803 8885/7700 5121
www.aquaticadiveresort.com

Compass Charters

Tel (+670) 7723 0968
www.compassadventuretours.com

Dive Timor Lorasae

Tel (+670) 7723 7092
www.divetimor.com



MUCH TO EXPERIENCE

For a small Island there is a lot to do and see - wildlife viewing, adventure activities and visiting our local communities.

Small Group Tours

Organise your transport (tuk tuk, 4-wheel drive, boat) and go exploring. Options range from enjoying Beloi and Vila by tuk tuk (craft shops, markets, villages) to full day tours. From Beloi/Vila longer trips include: driving up to Anartutu (market, artisans, expansive views), driving up above Vila (religious grotto, great scenery) and boating north to Akrema or further around to Adara/Atekru (white sand beaches, snorkeling, swimming).



Whale & Dolphin Watching

While whales and dolphins can be seen year round, during October-December Wetar Strait, between Dili and Ataúro, becomes a major migratory route. Large pods and many different species can be viewed at this time, sometimes from shore but more usually from a boat. Crossing from Dili keep a look out as sightings are common.



Birding

Ataúro with its wide range of habitats, from coastal to rugged forested mountains, has many bird species some of which are very rare.



Fishing

The ocean around Ataúro offers excellent fishing. Local people are adept with net, spear and trap. Arrange to go out in our wooden outriggers or charter a larger tourism boat for big game fishing.



Caves & Hot Springs

Ataúro is geologically interesting with overhanging cliffs, stepped terrace formations, limestone caves, rock fossils and even small hot water springs.



Trekking & Short Walks

From leisurely beach walks to multi-day village and strenuous mountain treks, Ataúro provides fantastic opportunities. Views from ridges are inspiring. Hiring local guides will enable you to learn and see more and stay on the right route. This is especially important with the more arduous treks. On the coastal walks enjoy swimming and snorkeling.



Popular options include trekking over the hills between Beloi and Adara; visiting Makili around the coast from Vila and walking from either Bikeli-Pala to Akrema or Adara to Atekru. For the harder climbing up sacred Mt Manukoko (999m) with a guide is a highlight. There are two access routes - from Vila (long and difficult) or Anartutu (easier). Shorter walks include Cave of our Lady Mary above Vila and the fresh water springs from Beloi.



Book guides via your accommodation or contact Roman Luan NGO Tel (+670) **7734 2452**





ARTS, CRAFTS & MARKETS

Ataúro communities specialize in different crafts and have developed their own unique style. Our most famous handicrafts are wood carvings including figurines, boats and diving goggles; metal knives; musical instruments; finely woven mats and baskets; clay cooking pots; jewelry and intricately embroidered bags, dolls and other items. Crafts can be bought from markets and co-operative shops. Purchasing such crafts helps support our local communities.

Our markets are a great place to watch the world go by and to gain a better insight into Island life. Local market days: Bikeli-Pala Tuesday, Anartutu Wednesday, Makili Thursday, Vila Friday and Beloi Saturday. Beloi market, coinciding with the midday ferry arrival, includes fresh barbecued seafood.

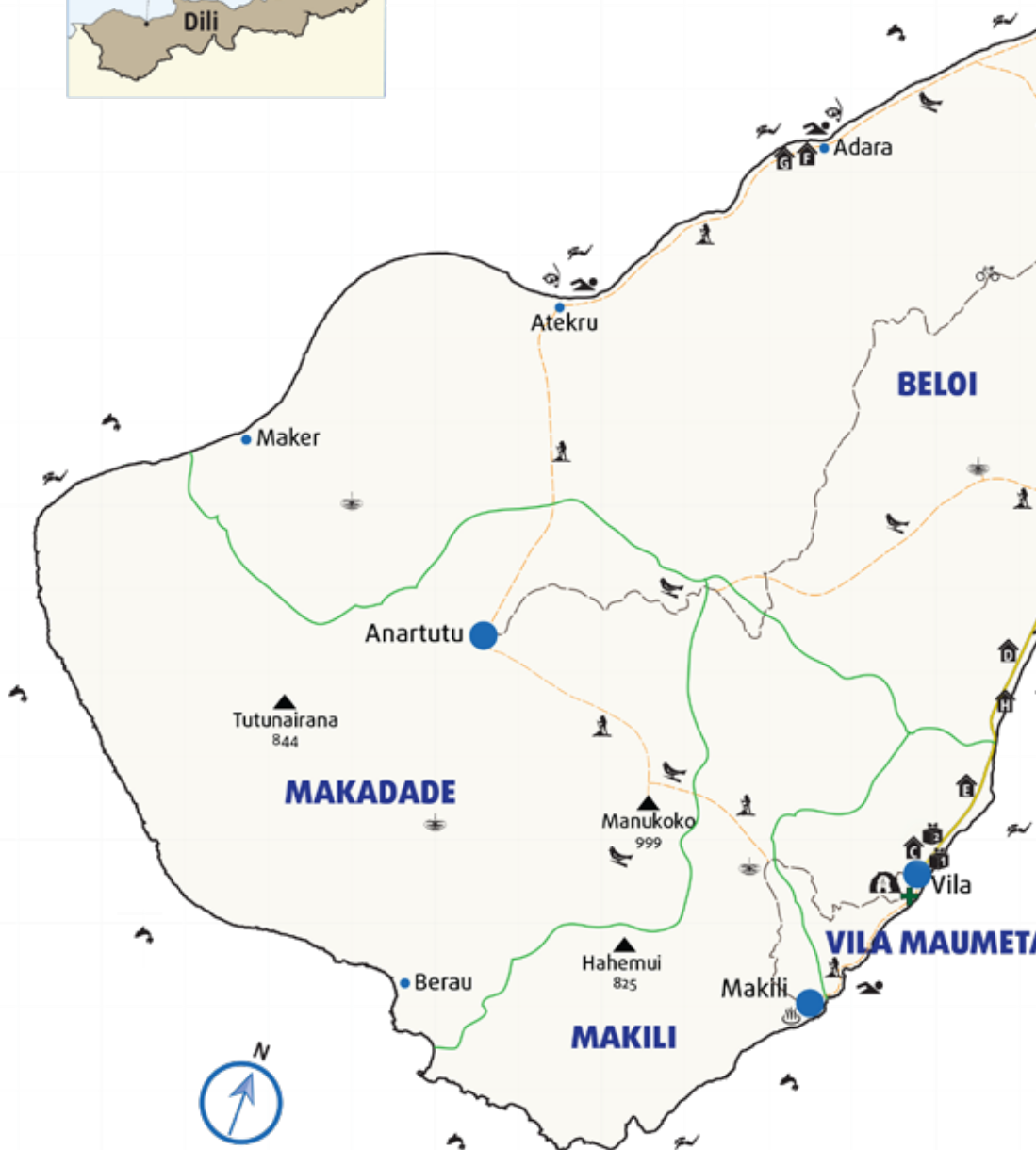


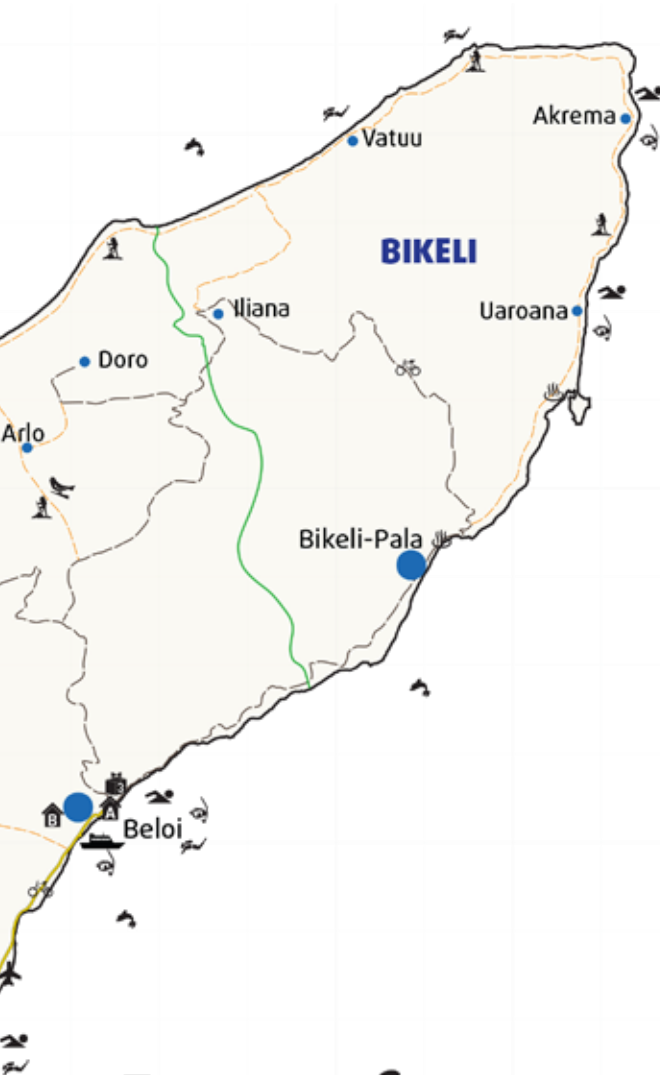
Handicraft Shops:

Bonecas de Ataúro (women co-op, Vila) - embroidered dolls, bags, education toys

Biajoia de Ataúro (hearing impaired co-op, Vila) – jewelry from local materials

Empreza Diak (NGO, Beloi) - clay pots, weaving, carvings





LEGEND

— Suko Boundaries

● Towns

● Villages

▲ Mountains (Highest)

Access

— Roads

--- Tracks (4-wheel drive/Trekking)

... Tracks (Trekking only)

Accommodation

A Barry's Place

B Beloi Beach Hotel

C Manukoko Rek

D Trisan House

E Vila Gracia

F Adara Eco-lodge (Mario's)

G Adara Eco-camp

H Iti Muran House

Craft Shops

1 Bonecas de Atauro

2 Biajoia de Atauro

3 Empreza Diak

Other

🏰 Cave of our Lady Mary

✈️ Airstrip

🚢 Pier

🏥 Medical Clinic

Activities

🤿 Diving

🐦 Bird Watching

🏊 Swimming

🤿 Snorkeling

🧑 Trekking

🐳 Whale/Dolphin Viewing

♨️ Hot Water Springs

💧 Fresh Water Springs

🚲 Cycling

0 1 2 kms

Scale 1:50

Ataúro

Note: Trekking routes and activity locations etc indicative only



ABOUT ATAÚRO

Only 25km long, Ataúro has a rugged mountainous spine and very narrow coastal plains. We regard the highest mountain, Manukoko (999m) as being sacred.

Our Island, mostly made of limestone with some volcanic rock formations, has a diverse landscape, vegetation and fauna.

Two exceedingly deep straits - Ombai and Wetar, meet at northern and southern ends. Fringed by one of the world's best coral reefs, Ataúro is a very significant fish breeding ground.

Around 10 000 people, mostly subsistence fishers and farmers live on our Island in small towns and villages linked by dirt road and walking track. Small wooden outriggers used for transport and fishing ply the coast.

Our main centers - Makili, Vila, Beloi and Bikeli-Pala are on the eastern side and Anartutu is in the mountains. Market days are a weekly highlight, bringing the community together to trade and socialize.

We grow annual crops of corn and beans and supplement our diet with fish, seaweed, seasonal fruit and vegetables. Cash income is mostly derived from what we harvest and sell on market days or in Dili.



CULTURAL HERITAGE

On Ataúro we are descended from three clans - Adade, Humangili and Manroni, each with its own dialect, songs, music and dance. Our unique heritage reflects many influences – animist beliefs inherited from ancient times, Portuguese colonization, the more recent Japanese and Indonesian invasions and the church, both Protestant and Catholic.

Due to geographic isolation our experience of colonization and conflict was different. In Portuguese times our Island was used for criminals and political prisoners (some from Africa) and during the Indonesian occupation supporters of the resistance movement were exiled here. This history has resulted in a conservative culture strongly influenced by Christianity which overlays traditional beliefs and practices that are still very much part of our daily life.



Festivals

In addition to more widely celebrated religious and state events, we have unique ceremonies. These include the very exuberant Betel Nut Festival held annually on the slopes of Abaktedi above Anartutu in July.



ACCOMMODATION & RESTAURANTS

Ataúro accommodation is small scale, offering comfortable but simple facilities often in idyllic surroundings. Options include Beloi Beach Hotel and eco-tourism accommodation. The eco-tourism properties employ local people, build with renewable materials and minimize electricity and water use etc. Usually visitors dine at their accommodation but casual dining also is available at Barry's Place, Manukoko Rek and Adara Eco-Resort. All bookings need to be made in advance.



Barry's Place

Beloi

Eco-resort with spacious open air restaurant, thatched bungalows and shared bathrooms in beautiful tropical gardens beside the beach. All meals included. Organizes activities/tours and rents snorkel gear/bikes/kayaks/fishing rods etc.

Tel (+670) **7744 1101**

www.barrys-place-atauro.com



Beloi Beach Hotel

Beloi

Small hotel with balcony restaurant/bar overlooking ocean. Rooms have air conditioning/private bathrooms. All meals and boat from Dili included. Organizes activities/tours and rents snorkel gear/bikes/fishing rods etc.

Tel (+670) **7558 3421**

www.beloibeachhotelmtimorleste.com



Trisan House

Beloi/Vila (midway)

Thatched bungalows with shared bathrooms shaded by coconut trees. Breakfast and other meals by arrangement. Good beach nearby.

Tel (+670) **7756 2762**



Manukoko Rek

Vila

Accommodation ranges from thatched huts (shared bathroom) to larger rooms (private bathroom). Restaurant specializes in Italian food. Breakfast included. Good beach nearby.

Tel (+670) **7748 7301**



Vila Gracia

Vila

Small guest house offering rooms with shared bathrooms. Breakfast by arrangement. Good beach nearby.

Tel (+670) **7728 7641**



Adara Eco-Resort (Mario's Place)

Simple thatched accommodation with shared bathroom, besides a beautiful white sand beach on the remote west coast. All meals included. Guided walks, boat trips and snorkel gear hire. Very relaxing and fantastic sunsets.

Tel (+670) **7795 7272**



Adara Eco-Safari Camp

Specialist dive camp next to beach (tents in thatched gazebos with shared bathrooms). Boat from Dili and meals included. Great place for diving, snorkeling and beach walks.

Tel (+670) **7723 0965/7723 0968**

www.compassadventuretours.com



Iti Muran House

Vila

Thatched two storey bungalow with modern amenities besides beach. Very secluded. Self catering or meals can be arranged.

Tel (+670) **7736 7677**



Homestays / Camping

For those wanting to stay in more remote communities, homestays and camping can be organized. Facilities will be basic, but wonderful hospitality is guaranteed. To arrange contact Roman Luan NGO.

Tel (+670) **7734 2452**



USEFUL INFORMATION

In welcoming you to Ataúro it is important that you are happy and safe and at the same time we protect our environment and culture.



Ataúro has NO crocodiles



Tropical climate 25-35C coast (drink plenty of water and use sun protection)



Bring all you need as only few very small local shops (Beloi, Vila) selling basic food/drinks; no pharmacy



Comprehensive travel insurance recommended - very small local medical clinic (Vila)



Mosquitoes can cause dengue/malaria so cover up and use insect repellent



No ATM/banks or credit card/efpos facilities (bring small money as larger notes hard to change)



Good mobile phone coverage - but not everywhere; more remote areas no electricity and larger towns only at night (torch useful)



Ataúro is a safe, friendly island but please don't flash money or leave valuables lying around



Recommended you hire a guide if trekking solo and women travel with a companion at night-time



We value our cultural heritage – please seek permission before visiting sacred places and respect the privacy of our communities



Do ask before taking photos or video of us – usually we will be happy to say yes



We appreciate very much if you dress modestly – includes swimming. Skimpy bikinis, nudity and kissing in public offend us. In our villages please wear suitable clothes



Our environment is precious – please do not litter, light fires or purchase souvenirs made from endangered species (e.g. turtle shell)



Diving and snorkeling should be under professional guidance to avoid damaging the marine ecosystem - do not touch or take coral, shells or other species



Ataúro is an extremely dry island with very limited freshwater – please use the resources that sustain us sparingly



GETTING AROUND

A flattish coastal road links Beloi and Vila enabling tuk tuk transport. Most of our Island however is very rugged and travel to villages such as Bikeli-Pala, Makili and Anartutu requires 4-wheel drive vehicle.

Other areas including the more isolated northern tip and west coast can only be reached by boat and walking. To arrange transport organize directly or via your accommodation.



Tuk Tuks

Tuk tuks provide a very enjoyable way to travel between Beloi and Vila. Just hop on board - prices are fixed.



Vehicles (4 wheel drive)

If you want to discover the interior, view some wonderful scenery and access mountain villages hiring a 4-wheel drive vehicle with driver is the way to go.

Boats

For snorkeling, whale and dolphin spotting and fishing, boats from local outriggers to more modern craft can be chartered. You can have a fun day discovering our beautiful coastline, beaches and reefs.



Mountain Bikes

Ataúro has a leisurely pace of life and exploring by bike is a great option. Most ride between Beloi and Vila, but the harder and experienced can choose a steep, more strenuous route and head for the hills.



GETTING THERE

Located across Wetar Strait from Dili, Ataúro can be readily accessed by boat and plane. All services are weather dependent and bookings are essential.

Compass Charters

Regular water taxi service (90 mins), departs Dili waterfront across from Casa Europa 7.30am daily and Beloi Beach (Barry's Place), Ataúro 9.30am (Mon-Fri) and 3pm (Sat-Sun). Extra charter services can be arranged.

Tel (+670) **7723 0965/7723 0964**

www.compassadventuretours.com

Nakroma Ferry

Saturday only service (3 hours), departs 9am Dili Port (ticket must be booked day prior from wharf office) and 3pm Beloi Pier, Ataúro (ticket purchased on Island day of travel).

Timor Charters (MV Ataúro)

Departs Dili 7.30am (Fri or Sat) and Beloi (Barry's Place), Ataúro 6.30am (Mon). Motor-cruiser crossing takes 2-3 hours. Charters can be arranged. Tel (+670) **7733 6612/7738 0000**

Note: Transport operators often will run additional departures if there is demand

Beloi Beach Hotel

Modern craft provide transport across Wetar Strait for hotel guests and other travelers (demand basis).

Tel (+670) **7558 3421**

www.beloibeachhoteltimorleste.com

MAF Plane

Small planes available for charter flights (20 mins), between Dili Airport and Ataúro (airstrip midway Beloi and Vila). Tel (+670) **7732 7771**

Local Boats

More adventurous travelers can arrange outrigger boat transport directly (note: usually no lifejackets/safety equipment etc).





INFORMATION & BOOKINGS

For more tourism information on Ataúro please contact Ataúro accommodation, transportation and dive operators or visit the Grupu Turizmu Ataúro website.

www.ataurotourism.org (from November 2015)

Photos: Greg Duncan, Kevin Austin, Rika Takeuchi, Robyn Jebson, Wayne Lovell **Design:** Seday Design

Grupu Turizmu Ataúro (GTA) warmly invites you to holiday on Ataúro. Comprising local tourism providers and community representatives our purpose is to increase employment and revenue from tourism for the communities of Ataúro, while at the same time protecting the environment and promoting local culture. This brochure is one of our tourism development initiatives, supported by BOSS Project (IADE/ILO) with Irish Aid/New Zealand Aid funding. Do come and visit Ataúro soon.

