

KIRIBATI

Mr John's little guide



In the fall of 2010 Mr John went north from Fiji to the Marshall Islands to escape Hurricane Season and like other yachts doing the run, we called in at Kiribati (pronounced ‘Kiribas’) along the way going both North and South. This was my third and fourth visits to Kiribati having done a similar, up and down, Hurricane Season run in 88/89 with Mr John IV.

In this guide I will tell you all I know and all I learnt from other people along the way, we didn't go to as many islands as we would have liked so I do not have first hand information on all the Islands..... I will make it clear to you what is ‘proven’ and what is not so you can judge for yourself how reliable the information is.

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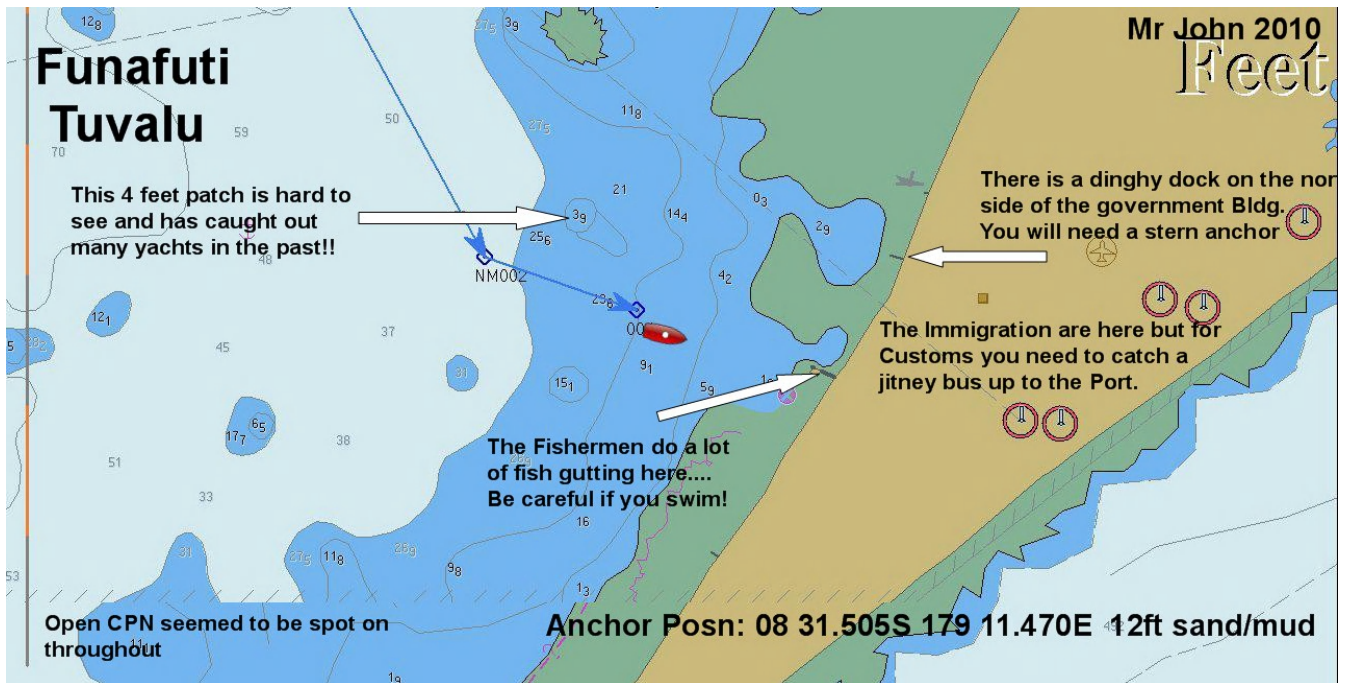
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GETTING THERE

First time I went north, I did Apia, Funafuti, Tarawa.... it was a reach and a blast all the way.

This last time, we went Lautoka, (Rotuma), Funafuti, Tarawa. It worked out OK but could have been better, we were looking forward to going to Rotuma and had a Coastal Clearance from Lautoka with the intention of checking out there (It has been a Full Clearance Port of Entry for Fiji for over a year now). Unfortunately as we got close the wind went around to the Northwest and it promised to increase above fifteen knots.... that made the main anchorage untenable and friends of ours, who were there, were bailing out. Thus we gave up on Rotuma and went direct to Funafuti. That wasn't bad but we arrived just too late to get anchored before dark and chose to hang off in the lee overnight. We put an anchor light on and let her drift, problem was the current was running and the wind came up fresh easterly during the night, so by morning we were almost eight miles off....it was a tough beat back to the island and then, when we got there, I didn't like the look of the western pass as we would have the morning sun in our eyes AND I guessed the current would be running out strong with the fresh easterly wind driving it....Even had we been able to motor through the pass against all that, we would then have been faced with a tough beat / motor all the way across the big lagoon. SO we tacked north keeping close up to the reef, went in through the northern pass and had a close reach down to the anchorage, where we arrived just after noon. The Northern and eastern passes are quite easy, even in poor lighting; we found our OpenCPN to be

quite accurate through out but not so accurate I'd recommend moving about in the night.



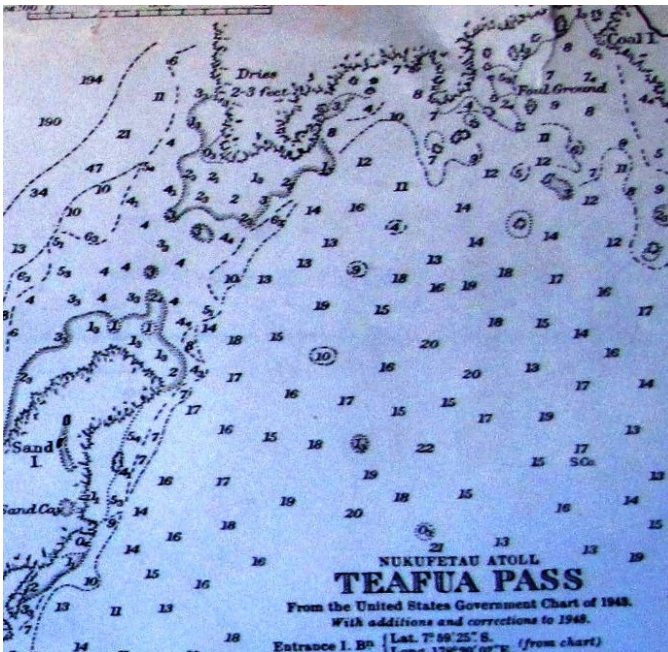
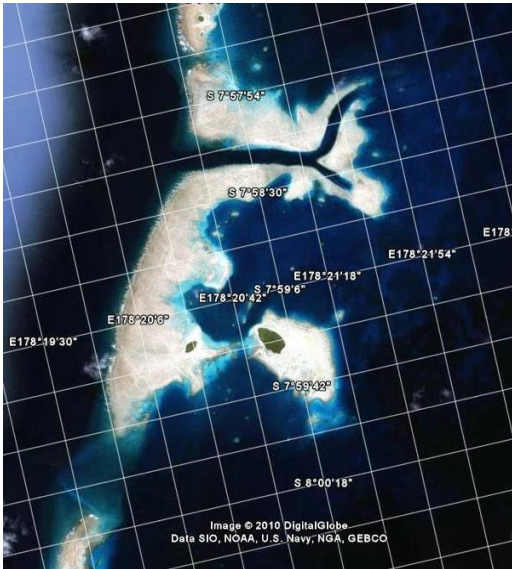
There may be more to see in Funafuti, the south end looks interesting and there is a Maritime Park. We had a ‘window’ and moved on quickly.

The Northern Pass was the only one we used... below is from the anchorage to the Pass

	Directions/Name	Distance	Leg Length	Leg Time	Total Time	Course	Position
1.	004	0 ft			0:00:00		S8 31.476 E179 11.447
2.	NM002	0.1 mi	0.1 mi		0:00:00	289° true	S8 31.436 E179 11.329
3.	NM001	0.5 mi	0.4 mi		0:00:00	331° true	S8 31.158 E179 11.176
4.	003	5.2 mi	4.7 mi		0:00:00	311° true	S8 28.475 E179 08.026
5.	002	8.8 mi	3.5 mi		0:00:00	325° true	S8 25.958 E179 06.265

Having been over this route twice I'd trust it with a ‘no sun’ arrival....Which means we'd probably do it at nightbut I didn't say that!!!!

Nukufetau looks an interesting place to visit but getting permission is difficult (to say the least). Boats have stopped without permission.....I didn't, but maybe I should have as I seem to be missing half the Pacific by staying legal!!!!



Nanumea ($5^{\circ}39'S.$, $176^{\circ}08'E.$), Also part of Tuvalu and something you may want to look at on the way north, is the northern most atoll of the Tuvalu group, consists of a coral reef, with two principal islets, Lakina and Nanumea, about 0.5 mile within its W and SE extremities, respectively, with a lagoon between them.

There is a small boat channel, available to boats at HW, which leads W of the W arm of Nanumea into the lagoon. It has been reported that a pier, 82m in length, extends from the village, and that two other piers exist in the lagoon.

Reefs extend off the SE point of Nanumea. !!!!

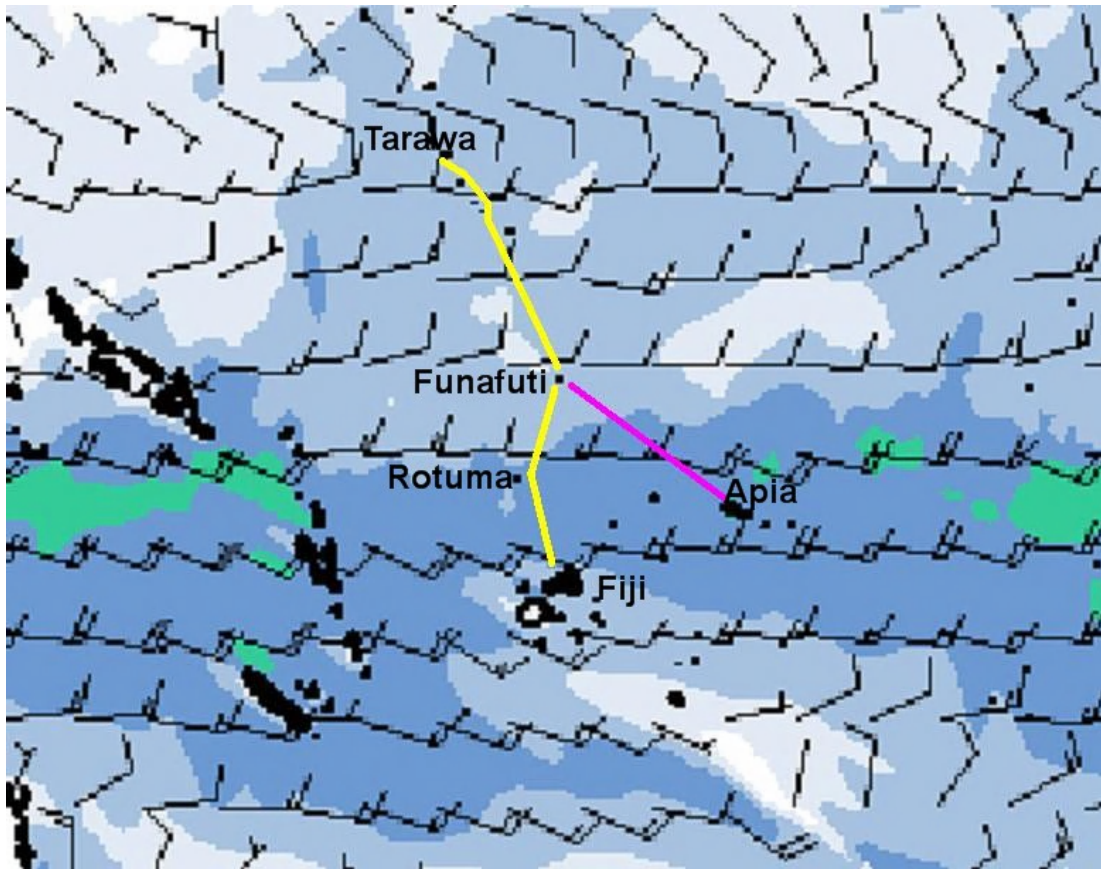


THE WEATHER....

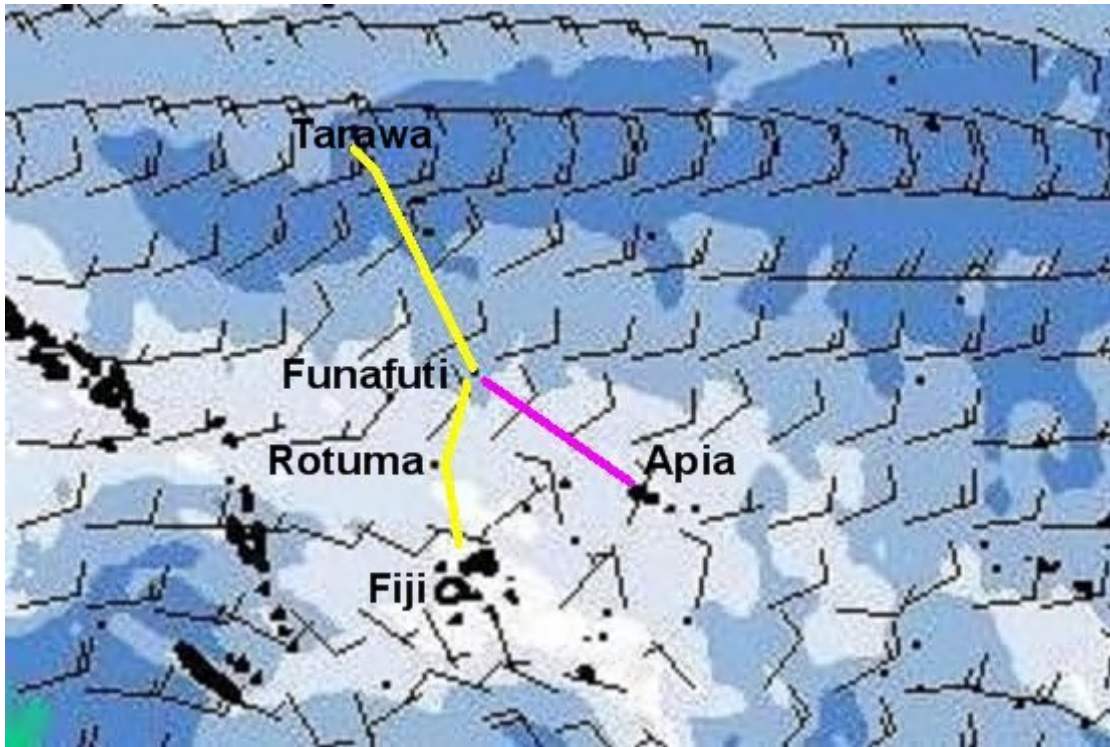
Maybe it was an odd year, probably not.....

In October / November the Trade winds die away and everything gets organised for the wet (Hurricane Season). You really need to get on up north before that happens or the winds will either drop away or turn northerly on you; possibly both.

The Trade Wind Pattern looks something like this:



By Mid November you are likely to come across this situation more often:



in fact, we left Funafuti on the 5th of November and we were lucky to have good conditions all the way up; those who left a couple of days behind us had a lot of beating in very light airs as the wind went right into the north for them.

Funafuti hadn't seen any rain in weeks when we arrived and most of Kiribati hadn't seen any rain in months, I mention this just in case you were thinking of collecting any on the way north.... You can get water ashore in both and if you pay enough it can be quite good but the stuff you don't pay for, you may not want to drink!

If you don't have a good water maker, you'd better carry as much as you can when leaving (Fiji /Samoa) for this run!

Winds—Weather.—The Southeast Trade season extends from March to November. It is characterized by more or less steady trade winds blowing from ESE and little rainfall. There is no actual doldrum period and no definite time of calms and squalls, although calms and cat's paws do occur quite often in June and July.

The average wind force during the day is about 12 knots, but occasionally a good fresh trade will blow up to 30 knots. After sunset the wind will fall to 3 to 6 knots, freshening again in the morning about 3 hours after sunrise. Occasionally, a fresh breeze or squall will be experienced in the morning or evening.

The westerly season extends from November to March, or more precisely, westerlies very seldom occur before the beginning of November or after the end of March. It is not certain that a westerly will occur in any one year during these months, but there have been exceptional cases in which westerlies have lasted throughout the entire year. In these exceptional cases, gales do not occur, winds are light, and the atmosphere is sultry. Such an unusual year might be encountered once in every decade.

There is some variation in the trades between the N and S Gilberts. In the N group, consisting of Apiang, the N part of Tarawa, Marakei, Butaritari Atoll (Makin Atoll), and Little Makin, the islands come under the influence of the Northeast Trades at certain times of the year. Apparently the border line of the trades is along this belt. In the S group the trades blow ESE, while in the N group from the E to just a little SE. In the westerly season, winds in the N group will blow ENE, with an occasional NE squall.

The westerly gales usually give 24 to 36 hours notice of their approach. The first indication is a bank of high cirrus working up slowly from the W. This is followed by a coppery haze in the afternoon, and a swell from the W. When these phenomena are observed it is fairly definite that a westerly gale will hit the island group within 36 hours.

The gale itself is heralded by a low bank of dark, nimbus clouds approaching on the W horizon, usually in the form of a horseshoe. The gale comes up fairly fast, and breaks with thunder, lightning, heavy rain, and a rush of wind. The gale may attain a rate of 50 miles per hour, and in localized instances in excess of 60 miles per hour. A very violent gale may last only 5 or 6 hours, but usually it is 3 days before the wind subsides. The wind then starts chopping from the SW and NW. The sky breaks, the wind and swell subside, and within 24 hours normal conditions return.

The "line island" squall, which is also encountered in these waters, is not to be confused with the westerly gale. These squalls may occur in any season and generally strike toward sunset. Their approach is often heralded by a cloud banking up among the trade wind clouds to windward. This cloud then spreads and forms a dark horseshoe bend on the horizon.

Heavy rain and a very strong gust of wind follows, with a force of about 50 miles per hour at the heart of the squall. The squall may last for an hour, or perhaps an hour and a half, but it has no lasting effect and good weather soon follows.

The climate in the Gilbert Islands is warm to hot, and drier in the S part of the group than in the N. Except on calm

days, which are somewhat oppressive, the heat is tempered by the trade winds. The nights are cool and pleasant.



Mr John IV and Vega lay at anchor in Betio Hr. 1988



Situation normal for Kiribati..going ashore at LW is fun!

THE RULES AND REGULATIONS:

When proceeding to Kiribati (Main Group), there is only one place to check inBetio Harbour, TARAWA and you are expected to proceed there directly. Vessels that stop on route WILL have problems and you may even lose your boat.

When you have cleared into Kiribati at Tarawa you MAY, at the discretion of the Immigration Department and Customs, be granted permission to visit one or more of the outer islands. This permission may limit the amount of time you can spend in any one island; no account is taken for weather, size of vessel, number of people on board or time taken on passage.

You have to make a request in writing before you will be issued a permit.

Example of request:

From:

30th March 2011

British Yacht "Mr John VI"
Tarawa, Republic of Kiribati

For the kind attention of:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration
Bairiki
Tarawa

Dear Sir.

With regard to the above vessel, I wish to thank you for the permission that you granted us to visit ABAIANG, this visit was most successful and we are most grateful for the time we spent amongst the amazingly friendly people of the island.

I now respectfully request that we may be permitted to visit ABEMAMA, for tourism and sight seeing, whilst on route south towards Rotuma / Fiji, for a period not exceeding two weeks.

We are particularly looking forward to visiting ABEMAMA to see the historical sites and experience the rich cultural history which makes this a unique tourist destination.

My wife and I understand difficulties of issuing this permit but we would be most grateful if you would take account of the small size of our sailing boat and the great difficulty we have, battling strong winds and currents to arrive at even one of the above islands. We have in fact sailed half way around the world to visit these beautiful islands and would gratefully appreciate any time that we are able to spend in them.

It is our intention to be in Rotuma by the 24th April and have advised the Fijian Immigration Services (FIRCA) of this. It will take us about ten days of sailing to reach this destination thus the request for a two week stop over.

Whilst in ABEMAMA we will maintain contact with the local Police and advise them of our departure outwards for Fiji so that you may also be informed. On arrival at our next port outside of Kiribati I will take the necessary steps to inform you / your department that this vessel has indeed departed Kiribati and safely arrived in Fiji.

Thanking you for your co-operation in this matter

Ko rabwa

John Wolstenholme
Master

The above request was refused.....!!!!!!

The Immigration Officer in charge...Ioane Anerika.... told us that **“under no circumstances would any yachts be granted permission to stop / visit any islands after they had cleared out, If we wished to visit any outer island we would have to return to Tarawa to take Clearance –out”**

This was on the way southbound.... in the end it didn't matter, as it was blowing so hard that we couldn't get up to windward enough to visit any of the Kiribati islands south of Tarawa and we went directly to Rotuma, a trip which should be possible (easy'ish) for any yacht headed for Fiji.

We did however visit Butaritari on the way north, but we did that with a permission from the Customs, without the Immigration knowing about it.....At the time, we didn't know that Island Visits were under the jurisdiction of the Immigration department and didn't think to ask them about it.....Customs had said it was OK... we went.... we enjoyed...we moved on to Majuro. It wasn't until we were headed south that we discovered that this visit was not quite kosher.

On the way north Customs gave other yachts permission to call at both Abaiang and Butaritari.....which they did and there were no repercussions.

I wanted to do it legal on the way south and made sure I was getting the official version.....

Some friends of ours found a way to get around the regulations and still have a permit in hand even though officially 'cleared out'. You may be able to do similar but the risk is yours to take.

I do however offer the following which was sent to me by the yacht Brick House:

"different subject... I think you heard that Tom on Running Tide checked out a few weeks ago from Tarawa to go to Fiji and he claims that Immigration SUGGESTED to him that he stop somewhere on the way to Fiji - so he got a permit to stop at Abemema from immigration. He didn't even talk to Customs about it. Then a few days ago, Summer Sky got a permit to cruise several islands while still checked in, and were given a permit that allowed 5 days in each of the 4 islands that they named, with a set of dates for each of the 4

islands, with no transit time in between. So they decided to just check out and leave. They asked immigration about stopping at one or two of the islands on the way out, and immigration told them no. Then they said that they were allowed to last time they came to Kiribati, some phone calls were made, they waited a few more hours, and then were given a letter to allow them to stop in Kuria and Tabiteuea on the way south after checking out. They are checked out and ready to go tomorrow - Saturday.”

So there you have it..... you may get to spend time in Paradise, you may have sailed a couple of thousand miles to be disappointed.

Whilst this state of play exists..... Kiribati is NOT a great cruising destination although it could be once they decide to clear yachts at the northern and southern end of the group. Maybe they will come up with some clear cut guidelines on the permits that they will issue to Immigration, Customs and publish via the Tourist board, that way we can all be working on the same page.

If however, you are going this way anyway..... then it is certainly worth calling in and doing whatever you can / what ever they allow you to do. The people and the culture of the outer islands is something special and we had a GREAT time and met some really NICE people here.

The toughest thing about visiting the islands is finding nice ways of politely refusing all the stuff they want to give you but really can't afford to part with!!!

ARRIVAL IN TARAWA:



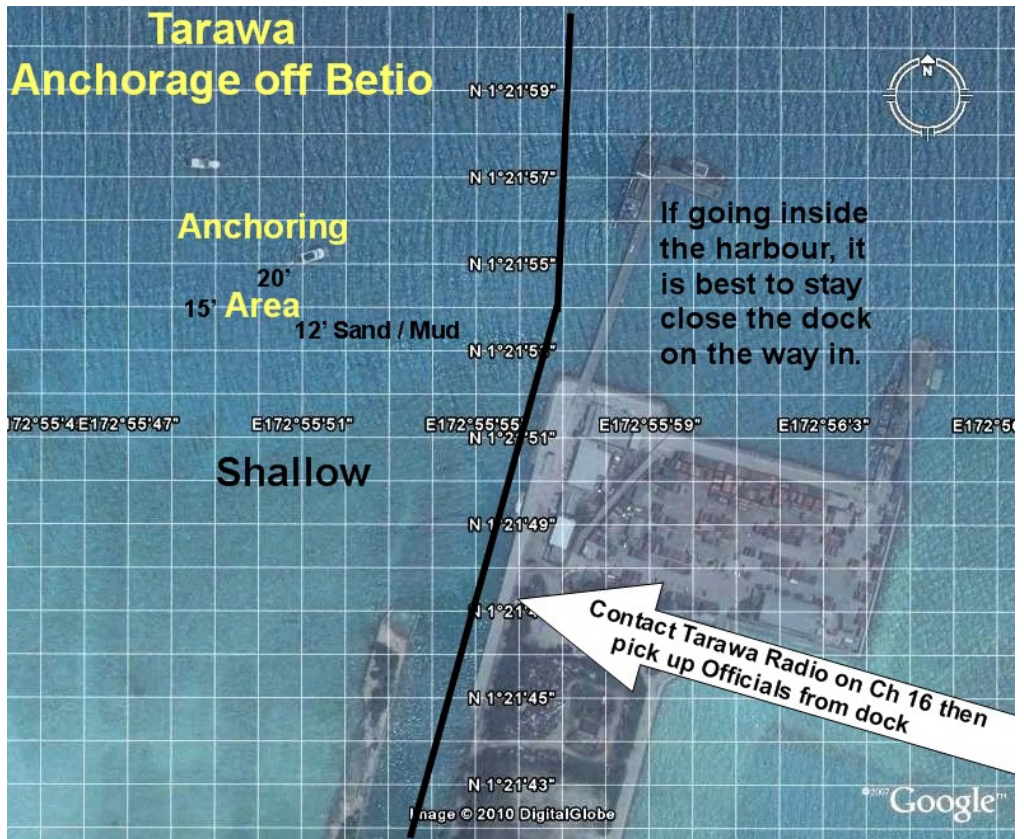
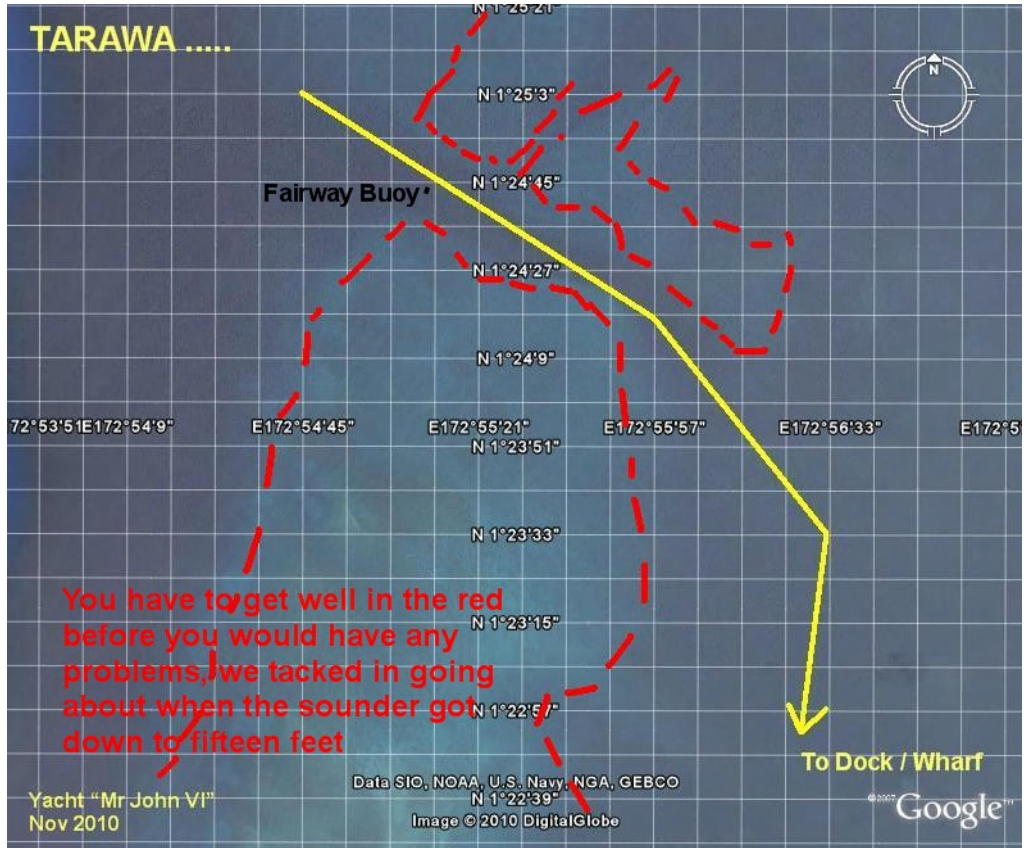
The reef at the SW of Tarawa extends well offshore but, for yachts, does not shelve steeply so once you get down to thirty feet, just follow the contour around and follow it north till you see the fairway buoy.



The unlighted buoy is easy to spot in calm conditions, less so when it's blowing but not a bad radar target.



	Directions/Name	Distance	Leg Length	Leg Time	Total Time	Course	Position	Elevation
1.	0023	0 ft			0:00:00		N1 25.001 E172 54.172	
2.	NM0021	2.1 mi	2.1 mi		0:00:00	110° true	N1 24.369 E172 55.898	
3.	NM0031	2.9 mi	0.8 mi		0:00:00	151° true	N1 23.794 E172 56.213	
4.	0052	3.3 mi	0.4 mi		0:00:00	154° true	N1 23.468 E172 56.369	
5.	0062	3.8 mi	0.5 mi		0:00:00	192° true	N1 23.026 E172 56.272	
6.	NM0005	4.6 mi	0.8 mi		0:00:00	192° true	N1 22.387 E172 56.133	
7.	0011	5.3 mi	0.7 mi		0:00:00	215° true	N1 21.873 E172 55.779	





Anchoring outside the harbour is fine in good weather but when the trade winds blow, even from the SE, the swell curves around and under the outer jetty causing some uncomfortable pitching. Being a small boat we were forced to sleep in the saloon as we were almost shipping water over the bow. It does go down somewhat at night but it's still uncomfortable.

In 88/89 I went inside and anchored..... It was fine but you needed half water to attempt the channel with over six feet of draft and I'm sure my keel went into the mud at low water. They may have done some dredging since then as our friends with Brick House (a Valiant 40) went in and anchored May 2011, reporting a \$20 / month charge and plenty of water.

The local authority has put a large rubbish tip just west of the Harbour (What would you do with prime waterfront?) and whilst this is downwind I'd be careful of rats if anchoring in the harbour. Also, there were some 40gal drums dotted around on the bottom, used for moorings, to try not to move around at speed....especially when going astern! Going to temporary anchorage inside, just to get the clearance done, makes good sense, especially when you have a little dinghy like mine.

Whilst we were there, another cruiser had his engine stolen off his dinghy..... this is unusual, but if you want to leave your dinghy tied to the dock whilst you party till 0400hrs then its best to leave it near the watchman on the west shore and maybe make an arrangement that he watch over it. During the day we left our dinghy near the steps in the SE corner and used a stern anchor to keep it clear; the steps are well used by the locals so don't block them.

North Tarawa is quite some distance down the lagoon, we just hired a car to go down there this trip; however on my previous visit some friends with seven foot draft went and laid some way off the runway (Airport) and spent an enjoyable couple of months there.



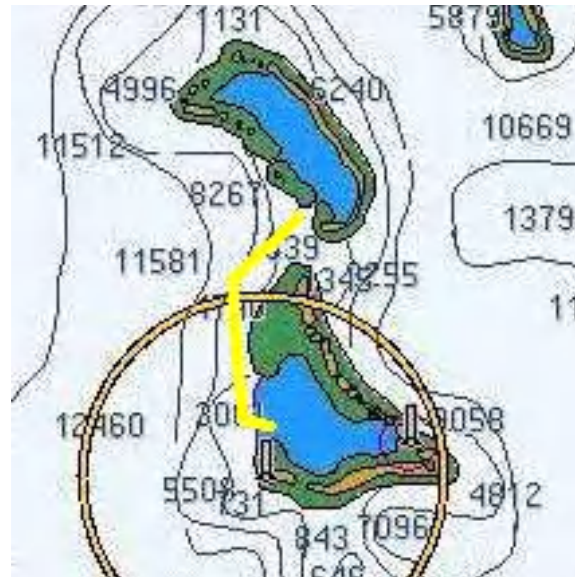
You can get ashore at either location and Taxi/Jitney rides are frequent. This end of the island is less crowded, much cleaner and well sheltered, so if you want to spend some time in Tarawa this should be considered. Getting there, just motor up the southern shore, 200yds off the reef, (which is clearly visible) with the sun above and behind.

ABAIANG:

If you don't go anywhere else, at least go to Abaiang which lies only five / six hours sail to the north; most of which is an easy reach in flat water.

The Bingham Channel is not a big problem and as you generally leave Tarawa in the morning (having got your permit the day before), you will be off the channel in the early afternoon with the sun overhead and behind.

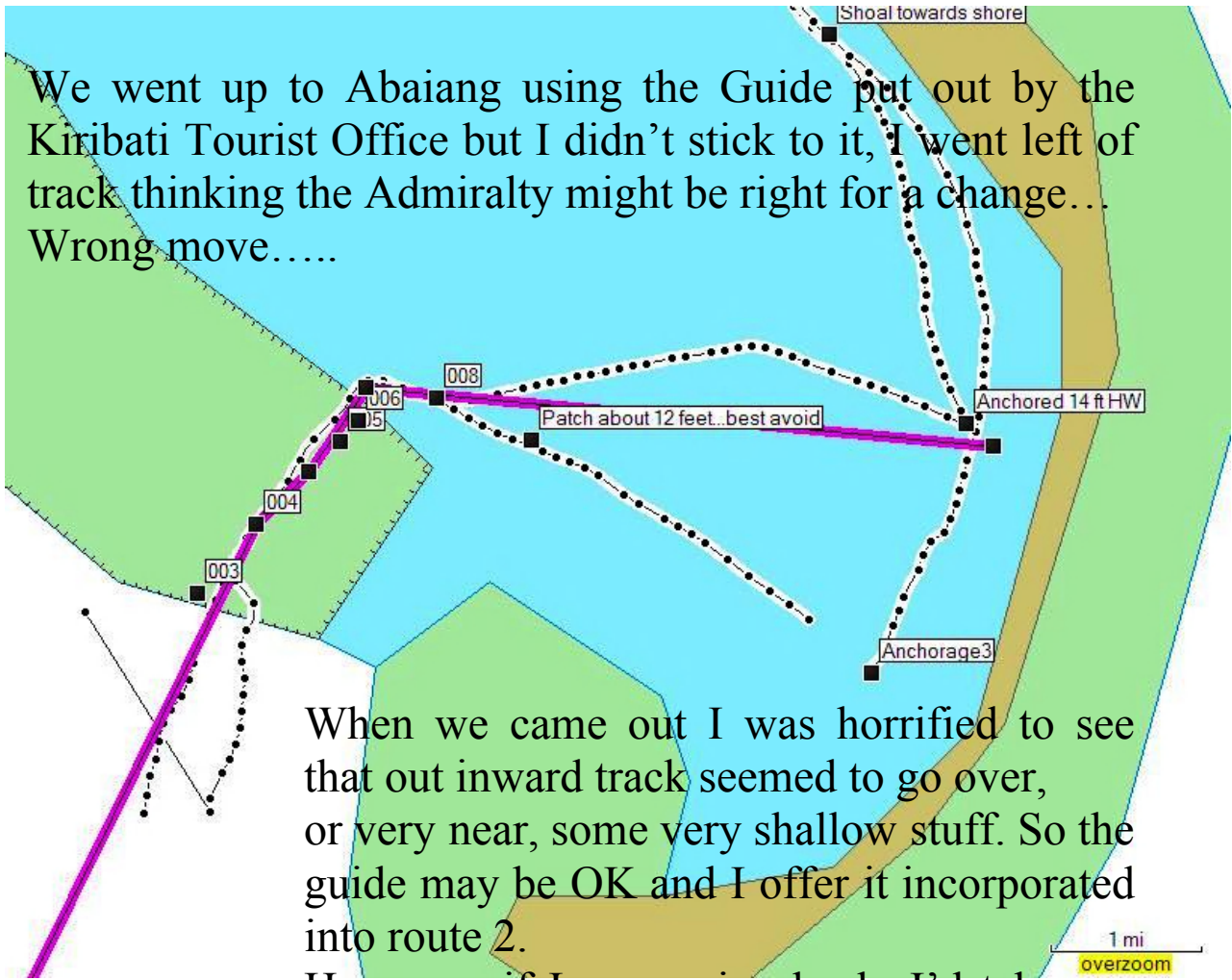
The last time I did it was all wrong; we left Tarawa just before midnight (Japan Tsunami warning) and arrived the Bingham channel early morning. Getting in and out of Tarawa in the dark is fun, it's not the worry of running aground, it's all those unlighted buoys!!!



We had the sun in our eyes at Abaiang all the way in to the anchorage and I swear I went over just about every reef in the lagoon on the way; Didn't see less than eight feet under the keel (I draw 4').



We went up to Abaiang using the Guide put out by the Kiribati Tourist Office but I didn't stick to it, I went left of track thinking the Admiralty might be right for a change... Wrong move.....



When we came out I was horrified to see that out inward track seemed to go over, or very near, some very shallow stuff. So the guide may be OK and I offer it incorporated into route 2.

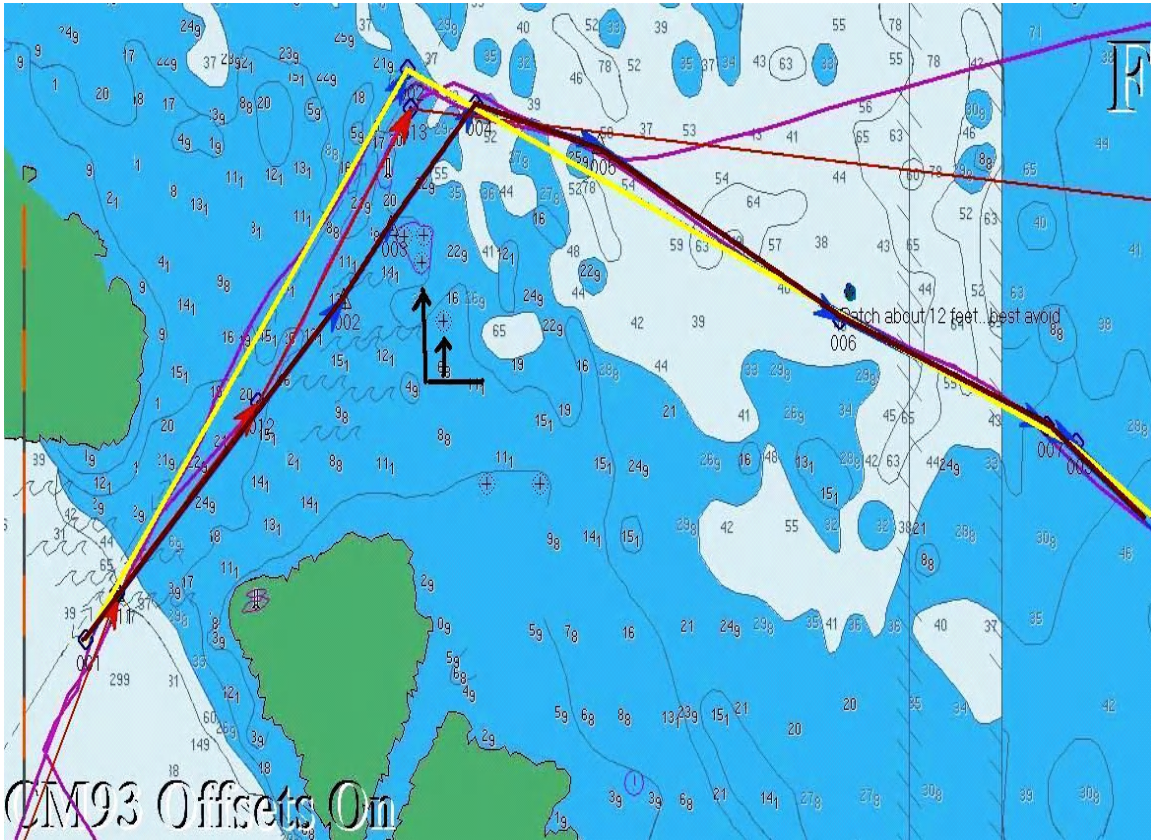
However, if I was going back, I'd take my preferred route as below; it's simple and keeps you away from all the dangers that can actually rip off your keel.

PREFERED ROUTE FOR ABAIANG

	Directions/Name	Distance	Leg Length	Leg Time	Total Time	Course	Position	Elevation
1.	001	0 ft			0:00:00		N1 45.224 E172 58.194	
2.	002	1.3 mi	1.3 mi		0:00:00	37° true	N1 46.158 E172 58.891	
3.	003	3.2 mi	1.8 mi		0:00:00	113° true	N1 45.546 E173 00.339	
4.	Anchorage	5.3 mi	2.1 mi		0:00:00	127° true	N1 44.450 E173 01.810	

BUT PLEASE LOOK WHERE YOU ARE GOING

The above route is shown in yellow on the chart here. The red line indicates the original route and track, which you should avoid and the black line is the route incorporating the waypoints given in the guide (route 2 below).



Route 2 which incorporates the waypoints given in the guide.....I don't like this as it 'cuts' the missing beacon...

	Directions/Name	Distance	Leg Length	Leg Time	Total Time	Course	Position	Elevation
1.	001	0 ft			0:00:00		N1 45.224 E172 58.194	
2.	002	0.9 mi	0.9 mi		0:00:00	45° true	N1 45.782 E172 58.752	
3.	003	1.1 mi	0.2 mi		0:00:00	41° true	N1 45.903 E172 58.855	
4.	004	1.4 mi	0.3 mi		0:00:00	43° true	N1 46.100 E172 59.038	
5.	005	1.7 mi	0.3 mi		0:00:00	103° true	N1 46.036 E172 59.307	
6.	006	2.4 mi	0.7 mi		0:00:00	119° true	N1 45.748 E172 59.828	
7.	007	3.0 mi	0.6 mi		0:00:00	111° true	N1 45.574 E173 00.275	
8.	Anchorage	5.2 mi	2.2 mi		0:00:00	126° true	N1 44.450 E173 01.810	

OK.... So you are inside and you make for the anchorage indicated. There were some patches on the way down and one is shown on the chart, however I feel confident that there was nothing the average yacht could hit you should of course watch the depth sounder on the way down; the good news here being that the shallow patches don't seem to come up abruptly (like the Tuamotu's) and most of them seem to be hard sand rather than coral.....

This was our favourite anchorage; it was most protected from the ESE but was good for winds from S to NE. Although anchored some ways offshore (a normal event throughout Kiribati due to the extent of the internal reef shelf) the Palm Trees ashore do take away a lot of the breeze (hence we were surprised to find so much wind outside when we eventually left!). Getting ashore two hours either side of LOW WATER is really not possible and you have to time your day around the tides.

Here, you are at the southern end of Tanimaiaki Village; the last 'house' on the beach side of the road belonged to Teaoka & Banrenga with their family.



Patrick off Brick House
caught this inside the lagoon

They were very good hosts to us and spoke good English so we enjoyed the communication.

Going ashore we could walk north, past the little medical clinic, to the village where there is a school and where we met Esta, one of the local teachers. In this



direction we were always greeting and being greeted, heavily into socialising as everyone wanted to talk to us. Walking south, there was very little until the next village a couple of kilometres away, thus we could step out and get exercise (which we badly needed) without interruption.

There were a couple of days when it blew so hard we didn't fancy going ashore, still it seemed a safe anchorage in about ten feet of water with a sandy mud that sucked the anchor in and wouldn't let go.....Very relaxing!

Abaiang Offers good protection and even were it to blow from the west, you could find shelter in the SW corner. The main thing for us was the absence of swell, something we'd found annoying at times in many other Pacific Island groups. However, when the wind blows fresh from S of SE it causes a small sea to run right up the shore of most of the island and there is little protection from it N of the Government Station at Taburao (anchored at 01 48.858N 173 01.080E).

Up near the northern end we found a little shelter at Tebunginaro where there was a pretty little village ashore and a hook of land to anchor behind; still some swell got around the point with the SEly honking but you could probably move in a little closer than we did (anchor posn: 01 55.011N 172 56.564E).

Right up at the northern end is Ribona, which requires a NE wind for a comfortable visit; that didn't happen this year but I was up there in 88/89 and found it delightful, lots of pools in extensive shallow areas; great for exploring.....



‘Going native’ in Ribona in 88

Through binoculars it looked a little more ‘built up’ since that visit and Brick House, who went down for a look see, said it didn’t look that inviting and moved on.

Another anchorage was off Koinawa (Posn: 01 52.368N 172 58.959E); where the conspicuous church makes a good landmark.



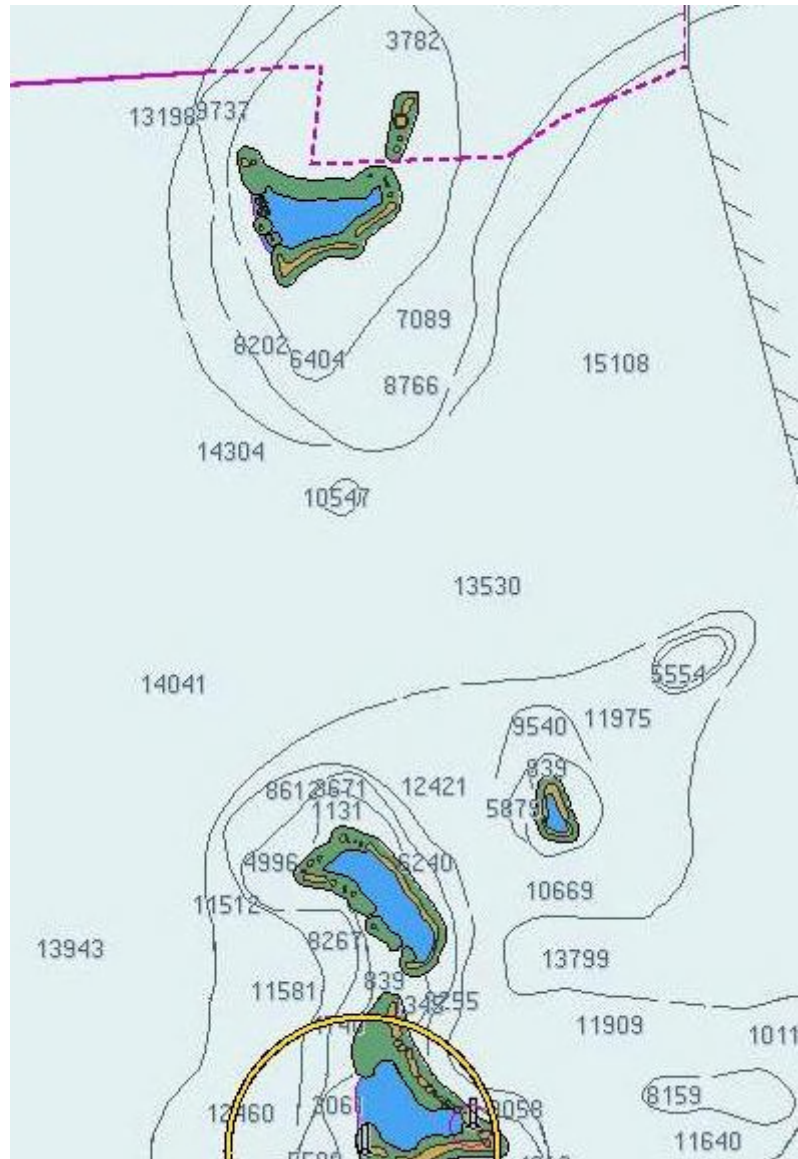
You used to be able to climb to the top of the belfry for panoramic photos over the island, unfortunately the steps are now giving way and this is no longer possible. It is however a pretty village (mission) with some interesting (big) Manaba; the people were also most hospitable and this is your best bet for getting some Fresh Water if they have some to spare.

BUTARITARI

It is a fairly slow overnight sail to get to Butaritari from Tarawa.

As it is almost due north, it is possible to get a good window, either way, for this trip almost any week of the year

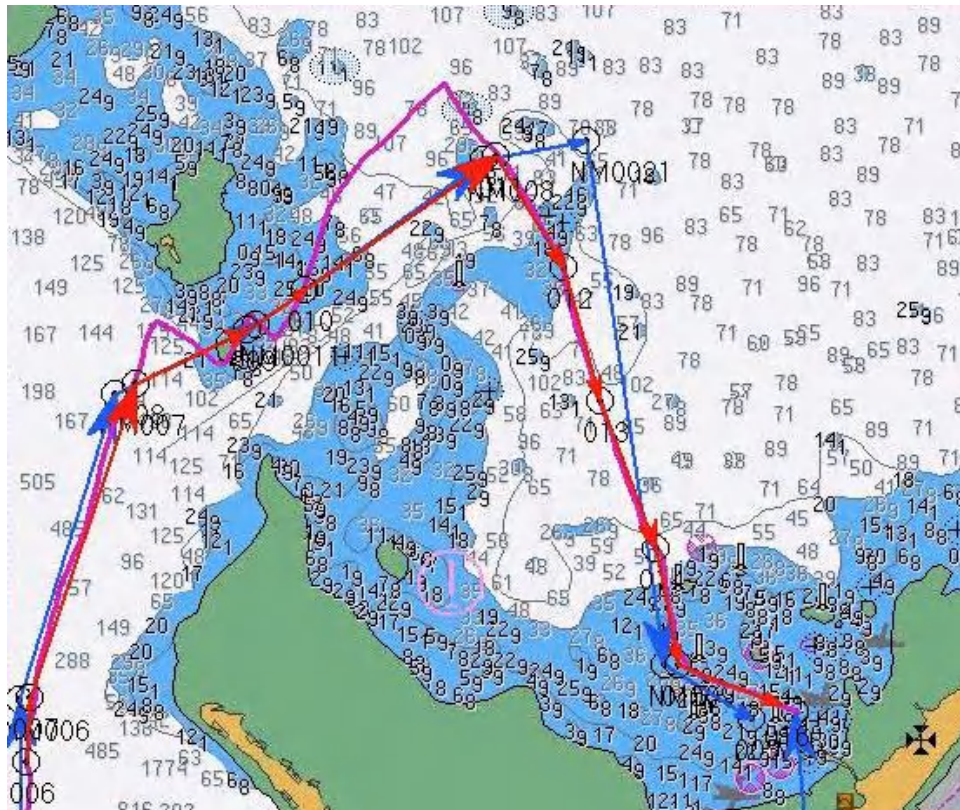
There are some over-falls to the north of Abaiang and the current can set strongly to the west between them.



DON'T leave Tarawa too early as you don't want to arrive until close on midday, so as to get the sun behind and above for the entry. As usual, most of the marks / beacons on the chart are missing so don't expect to see any stakes until you get close to the anchorage.

Both the Admiralty and Open CPN were well out, Kiribati is not great for Electronic Charting!!!!

On arrival we had the way-points from the Cruising Guide and they worked quite well, problem was we had the sun in our eyes, twenty plus knots of Ely wind and about 3 knots of current going out and some lumpy little seas. Under power alone we were not going in so we did a bit of tacking.

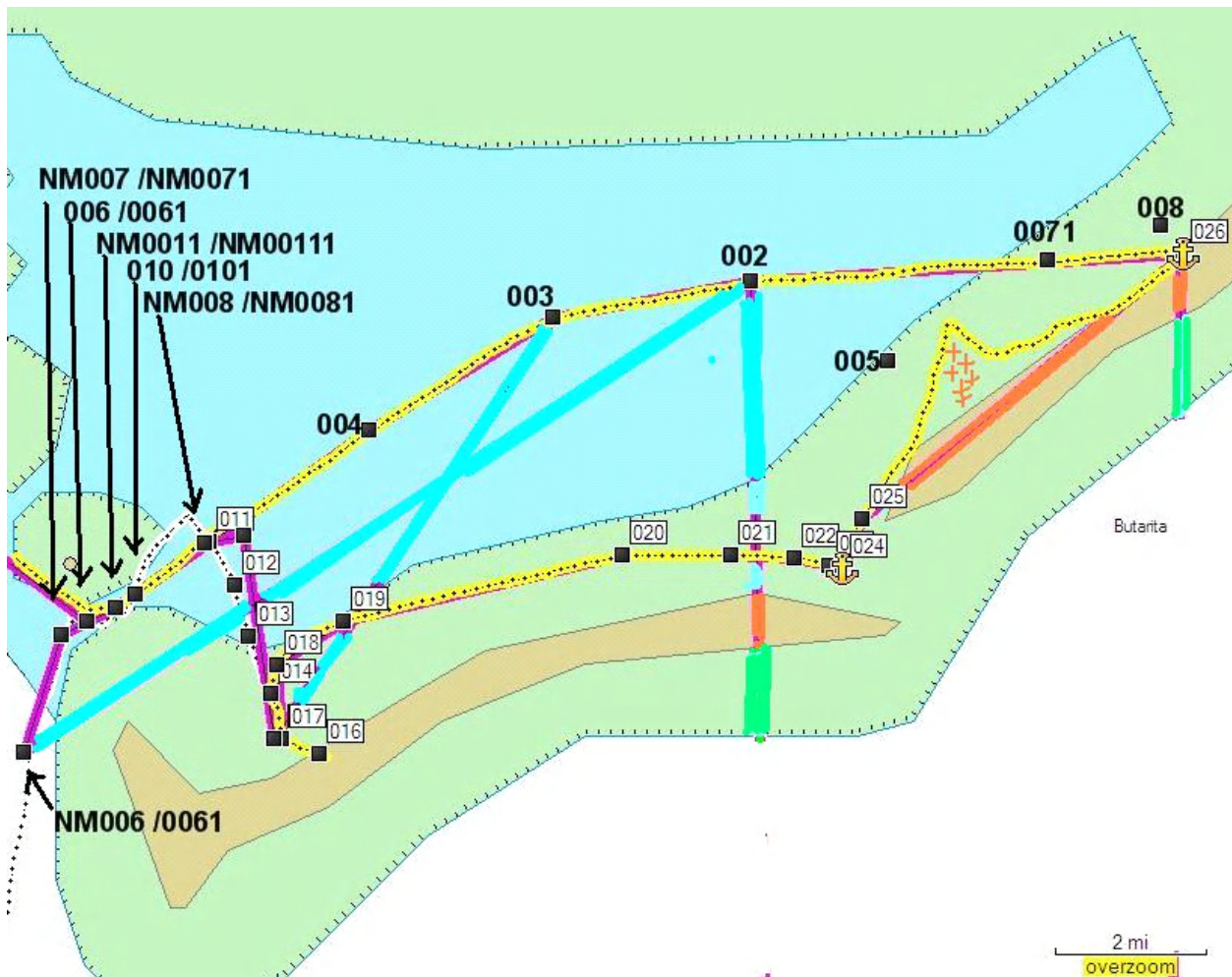


Butaritari Entry...There are a few things around to hit and we went over a couple of patches on the way in however we never saw less than 12feet under the keel

	Directions/Name	Distance	Leg Length	Leg Time	Total Time	Course	Position	Elevation
1.	006	0 ft			0:00:00		N3 04.258 E172 43.783	
2.	007	0.3 mi	0.3 mi		0:00:00	3° true	N3 04.545 E172 43.800	
3.	008	2.0 mi	1.7 mi		0:00:00	18° true	N3 05.953 E172 44.270	
4.	009	2.7 mi	0.6 mi		0:00:00	64° true	N3 06.192 E172 44.770	
5.	010	3.0 mi	0.4 mi		0:00:00	56° true	N3 06.366 E172 45.025	
6.	011	4.2 mi	1.2 mi		0:00:00	55° true	N3 06.967 E172 45.880	
7.	012	4.9 mi	0.7 mi		0:00:00	149° true	N3 06.464 E172 46.183	
8.	013	5.6 mi	0.7 mi		0:00:00	165° true	N3 05.874 E172 46.343	
9.	014	6.4 mi	0.8 mi		0:00:00	160° true	N3 05.212 E172 46.590	
10.	015	7.0 mi	0.6 mi		0:00:00	169° true	N3 04.693 E172 46.692	
11.	016	7.6 mi	0.6 mi		0:00:00	111° true	N3 04.518 E172 47.153	

You should really try and have the sun above and behind when moving inside this Atoll, there are many more coral patches than shown on the chart.

AS YOU CAN SEE on the charts above, both the admiralty and Electronic Charting is some ways out and you have to be some ways north of where the chart says you should be. Whilst my line shows us going north of the recommended track, we were actually on it and past that coral patch to Port, we actually tacked right up to its SE extremity before going about; in any light at all, the reef is quite easy to see.



If the weather is good you may want to start at the eastern end of the lagoon, up at Kuma Village....

In which case you can reverse my route outwards given below.....but if you do... start at 0061 as the last two WP's tend to north; towards Majuro (ignore the fourth digit in the table, it gets added when the WP is used more than once).

	Directions/Name	Distance	Leg Length	Leg Time	Total Time	Course	Position	Elevation
1.	0011	0 ft			0:00:00		N3 10.289 E172 57.067	
2.	0022	5.7 mi	5.7 mi		0:00:00	266° true	N3 09.966 E172 52.113	
3.	0031	8.4 mi	2.7 mi		0:00:00	260° true	N3 09.559 E172 49.842	
4.	0041	11.2 mi	2.9 mi		0:00:00	238° true	N3 08.248 E172 47.734	
5.	0101	15.0 mi	3.8 mi		0:00:00	235° true	N3 06.366 E172 45.025	
6.	0061	15.8 mi	0.7 mi		0:00:00	240° true	N3 06.048 E172 44.474	
7.	0072	18.9 mi	3.2 mi		0:00:00	307° true	N3 07.712 E172 42.263	
8.	00211	30.1 mi	11.1 mi		0:00:00	339° true	N3 16.753 E172 38.851	

If you do go to Kuma Village, they always need School Supplies.... They are on the far end of the supply chain from Tarawa. Also, BEWARE of the overwhelming hospitality; you may never want to leave!!!!!!

As can be seen on the first map, we went to Butaritari village first, this was a great anchorage, eight feet under the keel at low water in a fine sandy mud, great holding! We went ashore on the dock... stern anchor and long painter required; low tide was best avoided.....

Take your passports and permit as the policeman likes to see them, turn right at the end of the dock and it's about 200 yards on the right. The jail was interesting; you can get a picture taken in there if you like!



The jetty at Butaritari Village



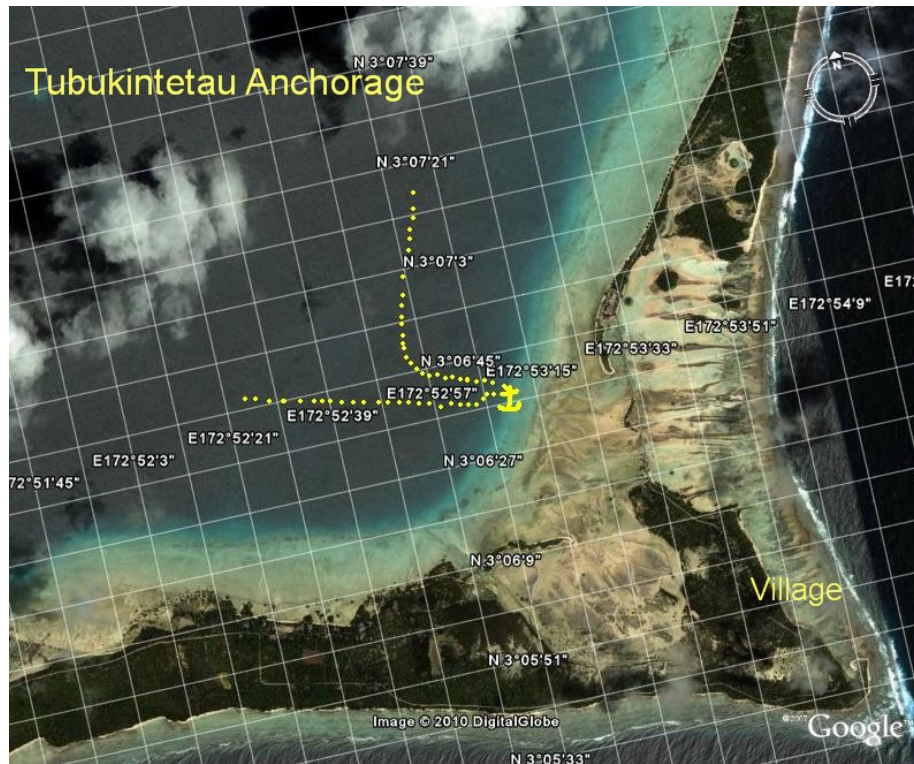
Don't forget your stern anchor.....

When we left Butaritari anchorage for Tubukintetau (the government centre), this is the route we took.

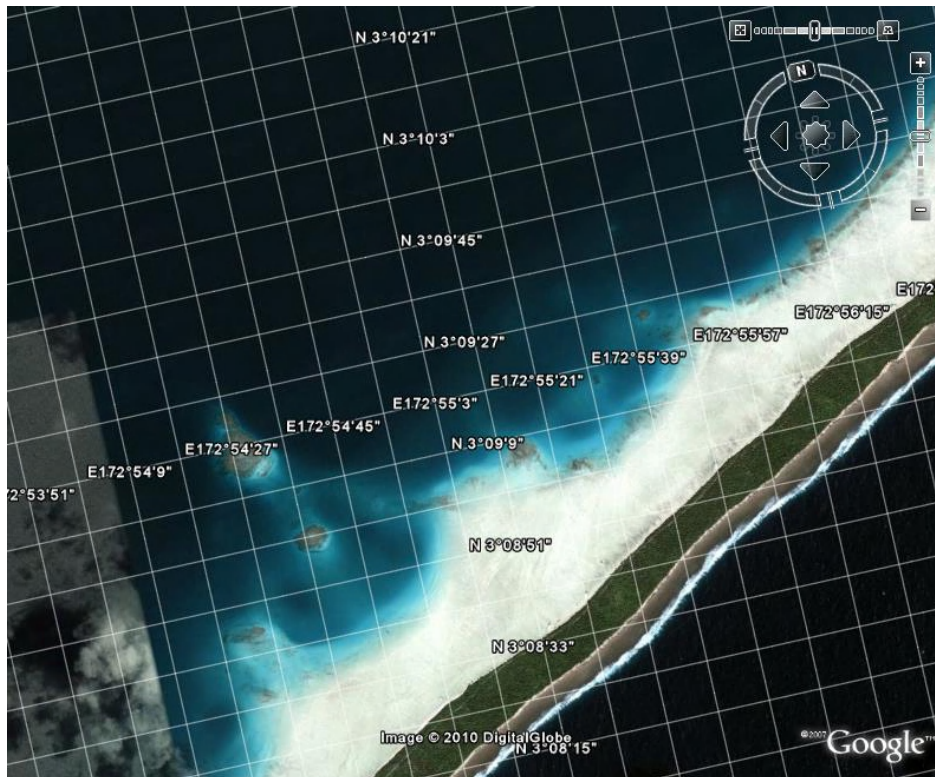
	Directions/Name	Distance	Leg Length	Leg Time	Total Time	Course	Position	Elevation
1.	017	0 ft			0:00:00		N3 04.691 E172 46.719	
2.	018	1.0 mi	1.0 mi		0:00:00	357° true	N3 05.551 E172 46.666	
3.	019	2.0 mi	1.1 mi		0:00:00	57° true	N3 06.053 E172 47.429	
4.	020	5.8 mi	3.8 mi		0:00:00	77° true	N3 06.811 E172 50.638	
5.	021	7.3 mi	1.5 mi		0:00:00	90° true	N3 06.811 E172 51.902	
6.	022	8.1 mi	0.8 mi		0:00:00	93° true	N3 06.774 E172 52.627	
7.	023	8.6 mi	0.5 mi		0:00:00	101° true	N3 06.698 E172 53.016	
8.	024	8.8 mi	0.2 mi		0:00:00	103° true	N3 06.660 E172 53.177	
9.	025	9.5 mi	0.7 mi		0:00:00	22° true	N3 07.225 E172 53.405	

We didn't get ashore here, the tides were all wrong and the wind was blowing strong....It looked interesting and you could get your dinghy up near the bridge.

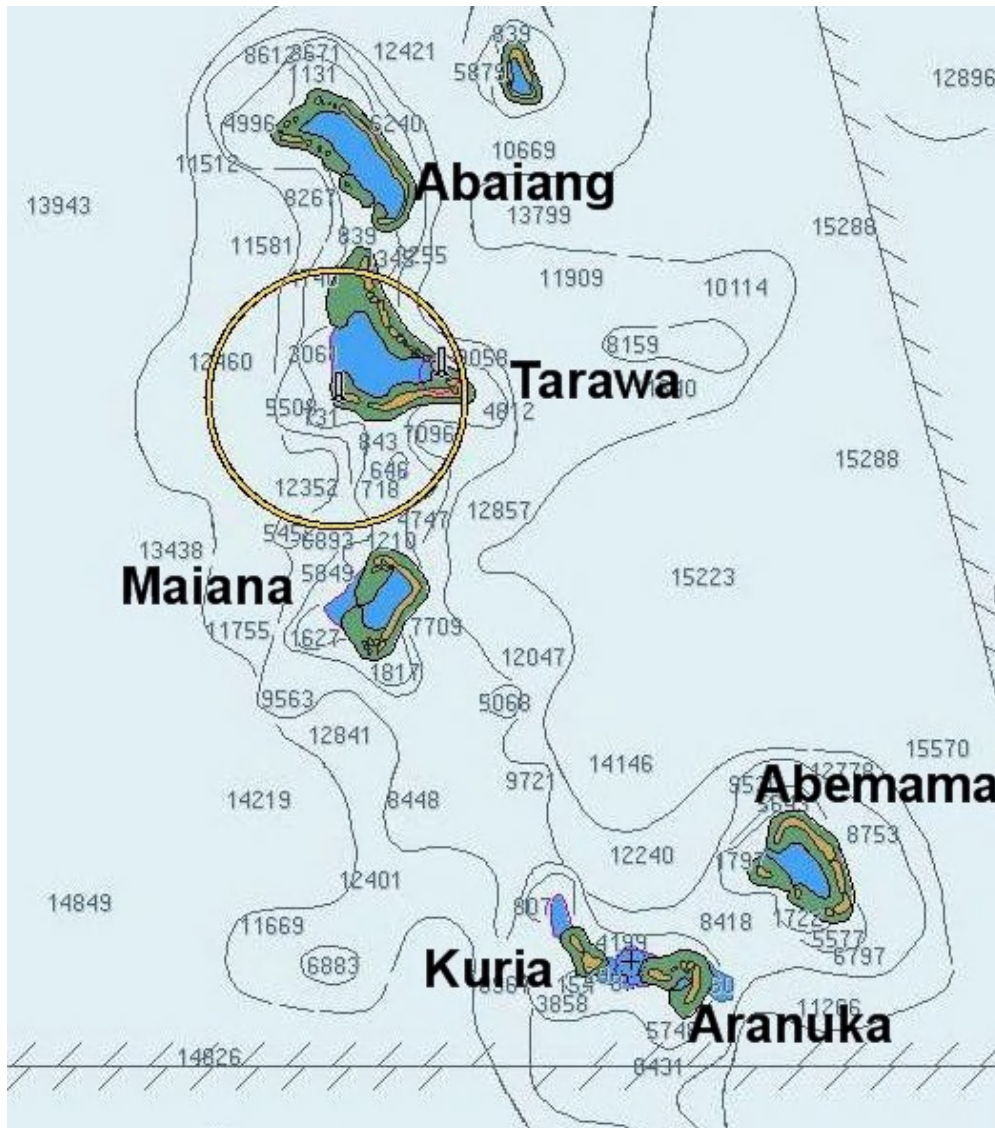
Anchor Posn: 03 06.660N 172 53.178E 12ft mud / sand, good holding and protection from S to ENE.



If you take the coast up to Kuma from here watch out for the extended reef patches that you can see we went around on our track... You could try getting inside of them???



THE PLACES WE DIDN'T GET TO. The Southern Group
But I'll give you what I have.....



MAIANA

Very few people take yachts to Maiana....there's a reason for that.....unless you have very shallow draft you'll have to anchor way off and it's roly with a long distance to shore.

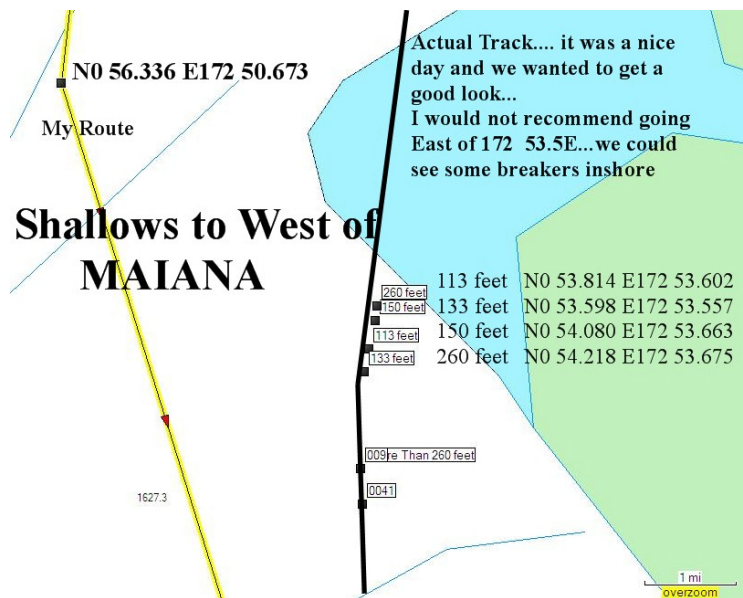
There are many dangers in the lagoon, which is shallow and has not been surveyed.. Lots of Coral Heads all over.

There is a small boat passage, which dries 0.3m, and leads through the reef near the N extremity of the atoll to the island of **Tebikerei** (1°00'N., 173°01'E.), on which there is a village. The passage is marked by "perches" standing in piles of stones which cover at HW. A shoal, with a depth of 3.7m, lies about 0.5 mile WNW of the entrance to this boat passage.

Another passage used by the local ferry boats to Tarawa has reported depths of 1.8 to 5.5m and lies about 7 miles SW of the N extremity of the island. This passage is/was marked by perches, and goes up to the government station on the SE side of the lagoon where there is a small jetty and some conspicuous buildings.

If you want to try this it may be best to anchor off the entrance until the Ferry comes over from Tarawa....then follow it..... A lot of the beacons are missing!

WATCH OUT...that shoal on the SW of the island goes a long way out; seas break on it even in moderate conditions!



ABEMAMA....

Means “Land of the Bright Moon”; that’s what it’s shaped like also and gives perhaps the most all-round protection of any of the Kiribati Islands.

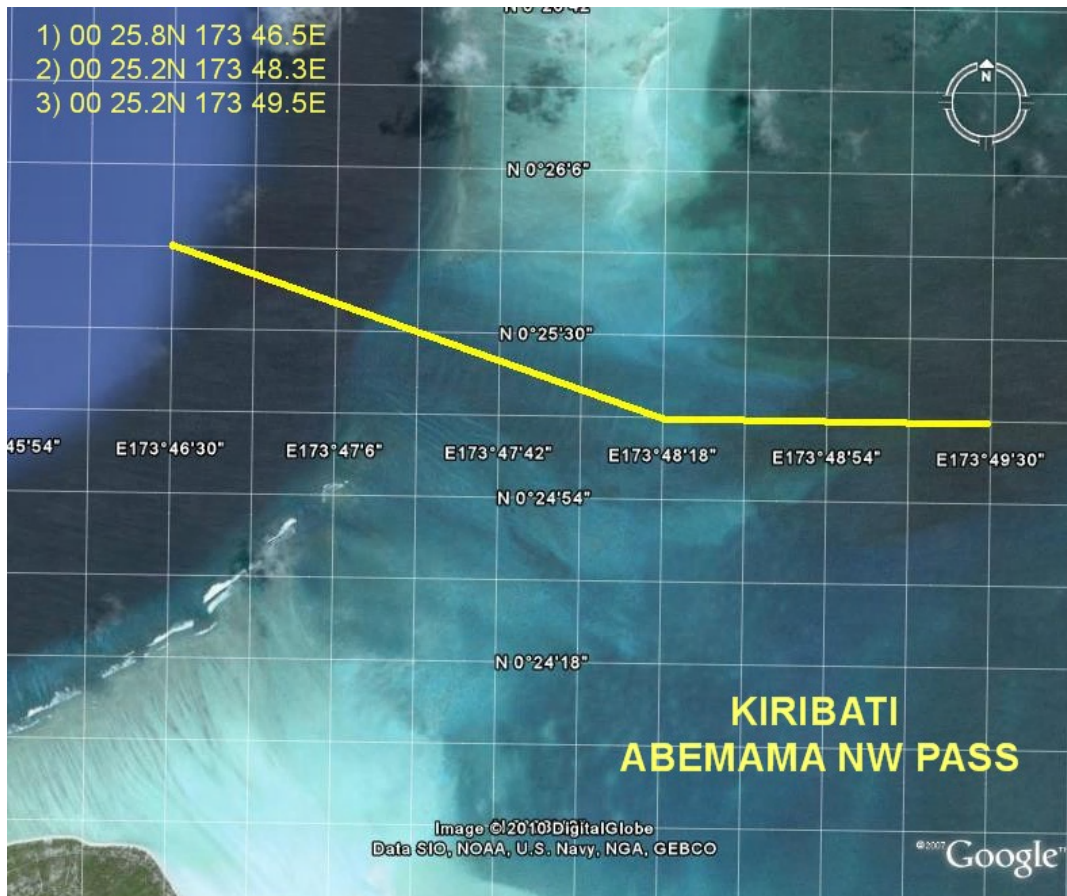


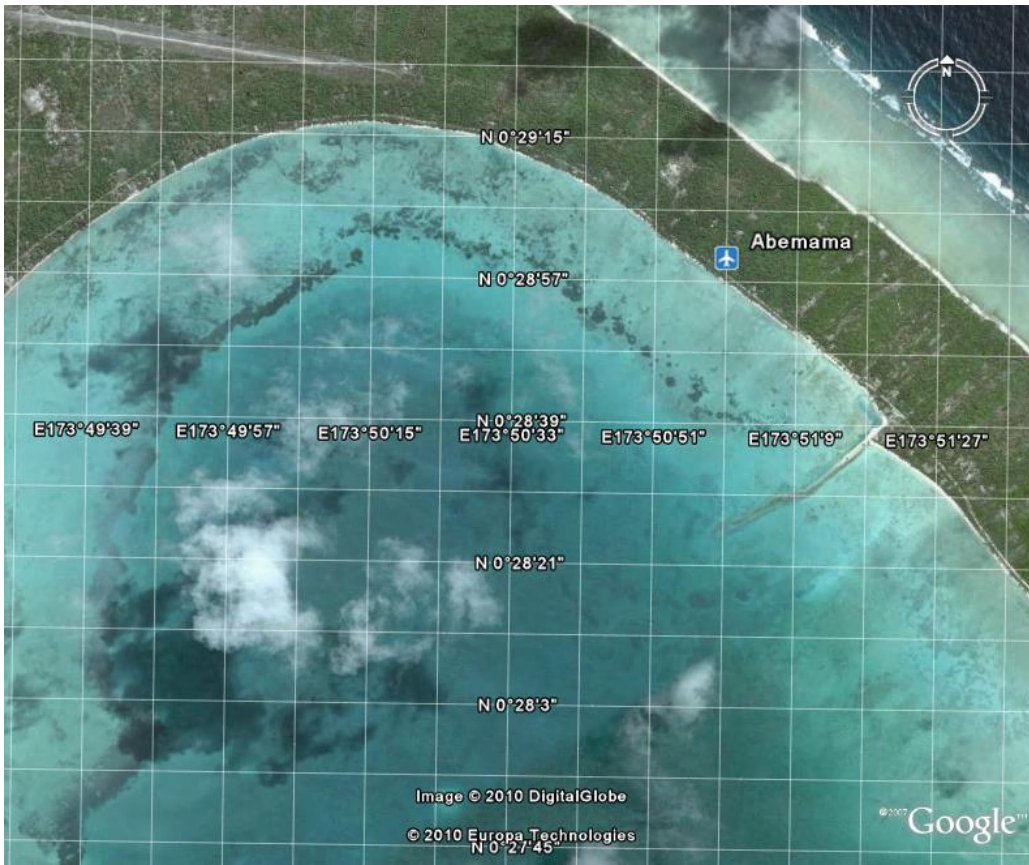
This is a slow overnight from Tarawa in light or NE conditions.....however there is a strong west going current between the islands (A friend of mine got swept sideways onto the reef of Maiana one a dark night in 88; how he got his boat across the island and back in the water on the other side was a feat of seamanship beyond most of today’s cruisers).

WATCH OUT FOR THE CURRENT

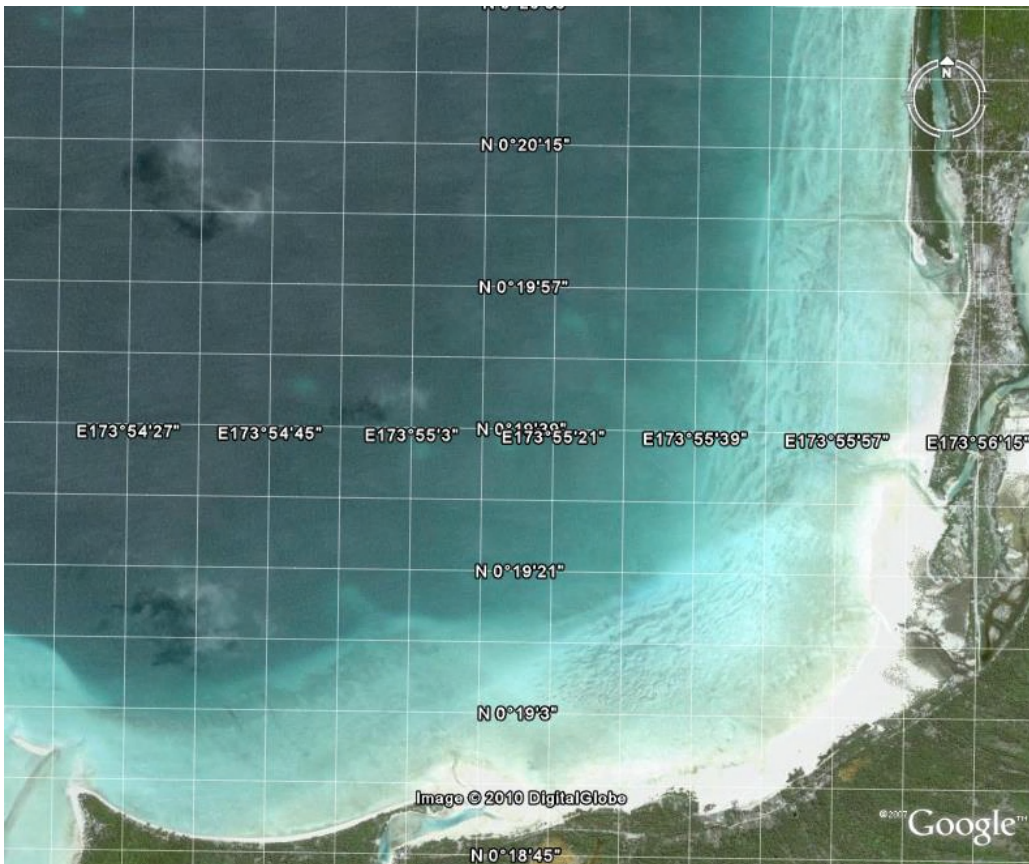
Route from Tarawa anchorage.... I've included WP's you need to stay clear off the SW point of Tarawa.

	Directions/Name	Distance	Leg Length	Leg Time	Total Time	Course	Position	Elevation
1.	001	0 ft			0:00:00		N1 21.915 E172 55.788	
2.	NM005	0.7 mi	0.7 mi		0:00:00	36° true	N1 22.387 E172 56.133	
3.	006	1.4 mi	0.8 mi		0:00:00	12° true	N1 23.026 E172 56.272	
4.	005	1.9 mi	0.5 mi		0:00:00	12° true	N1 23.468 E172 56.369	
5.	NM003	2.4 mi	0.4 mi		0:00:00	334° true	N1 23.794 E172 56.213	
6.	NM002	3.1 mi	0.8 mi		0:00:00	331° true	N1 24.369 E172 55.898	
7.	007	4.2 mi	1.1 mi		0:00:00	290° true	N1 24.691 E172 55.024	
8.	008	5.0 mi	0.8 mi		0:00:00	232° true	N1 24.249 E172 54.448	
9.	009	5.9 mi	0.9 mi		0:00:00	212° true	N1 23.619 E172 54.047	
10.	010	7.3 mi	1.5 mi		0:00:00	192° true	N1 22.383 E172 53.788	
11.	011	9.1 mi	1.8 mi		0:00:00	183° true	N1 20.834 E172 53.709	
12.	012	96.7 mi	87.6 mi		0:00:00	136° true	N0 25.804 E173 46.507	
13.	013	98.9 mi	2.2 mi		0:00:00	109° true	N0 25.194 E173 48.302	
14.	014	100 mi	1.4 mi		0:00:00	90° true	N0 25.198 E173 49.496	
15.	015	106 mi	5.6 mi		0:00:00	95° true	N0 24.740 E173 54.316	
16.	016	107 mi	0.7 mi		0:00:00	112° true	N0 24.520 E173 54.851	



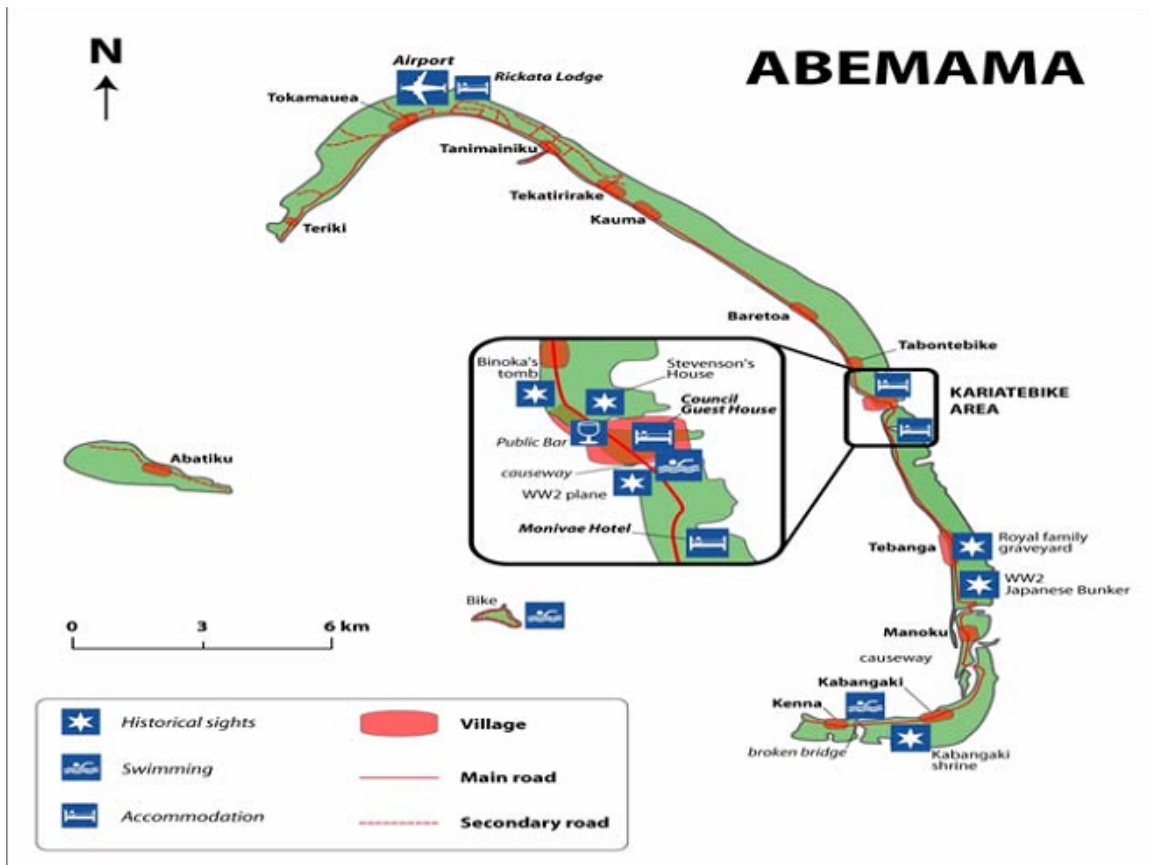


North (above) and South (below) anchorages on Abemama



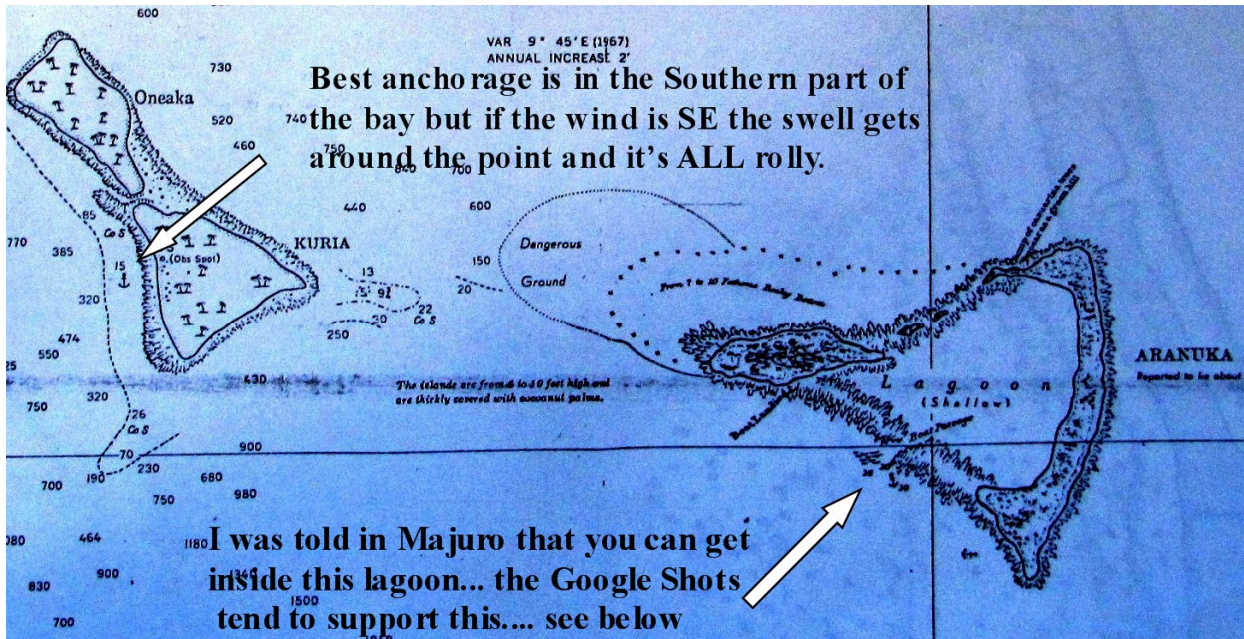
>In 2011, the yacht 'Brick House' reported that they anchored at: 00 27.310N 173 51.931E, They said that it was the most 'wealthy' of the islands they'd visited, the natives were extremely friendly and that they were the first boat since 2006..... apparently they had 7 or 8 a year before then....<

Maybe that has something to do with the Permit System???



“BH” also made some comments about going to the southern anchorage as it would be calmer...With the SE trade wind honking anything north of the Kariatebike area may get a bit lumpy.... the reef stretches well offshore so you are anchored a fair way out into the lagoon. Plenty of wind in the wind generator and a little privacy.....

KURIA



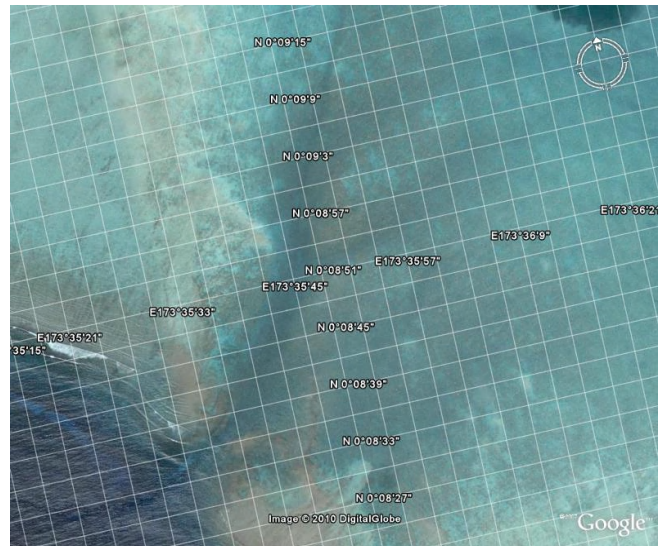
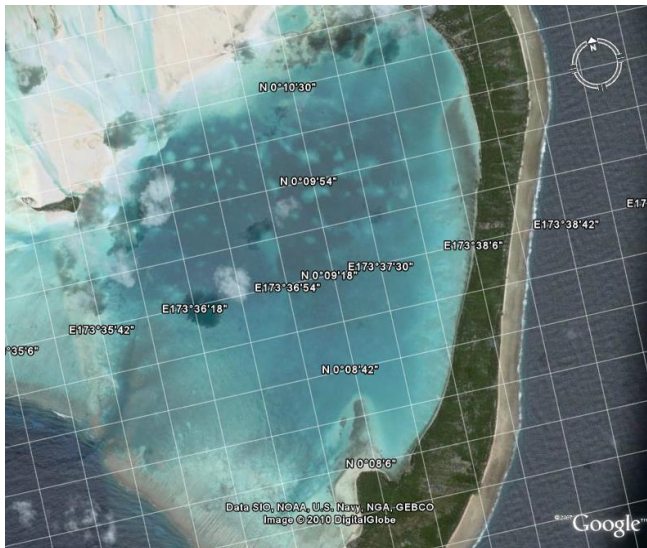
'BH' was here on their way to Abemama....took them 24hrs to bash and crash up to windward from here against the current....they left in the morning thinking they could do it in daylight....Maybe it would be better to leave late evening and do it as a slow overnight.

Quote "BH"

>IN case you too end up here in Kuria: Our anchoring position is: 00 13.466N 173 24 147E in 35 feet, sand bottom. Not as comfortable as Abaiang at its best, but not as bad as other places we have been... definitely better than Tarawa most of the time; A tiny bit roly with about 20 knots of wind. Can't get ashore that we can see unless at high tide...a big dry reef to go over at low tide...very far from shore...maybe different on other parts of the island- we are about 1/3 of the way from the top.<

The Policeman was out to see their permit soon after arrival, his name was Taboose (pronounced like Caboose) and he was very very nice to Brick House (they did have a permit!). When they went ashore they found the island Very Tidy and everyone most friendly..... They get about one yacht per year and BH was the first that year.

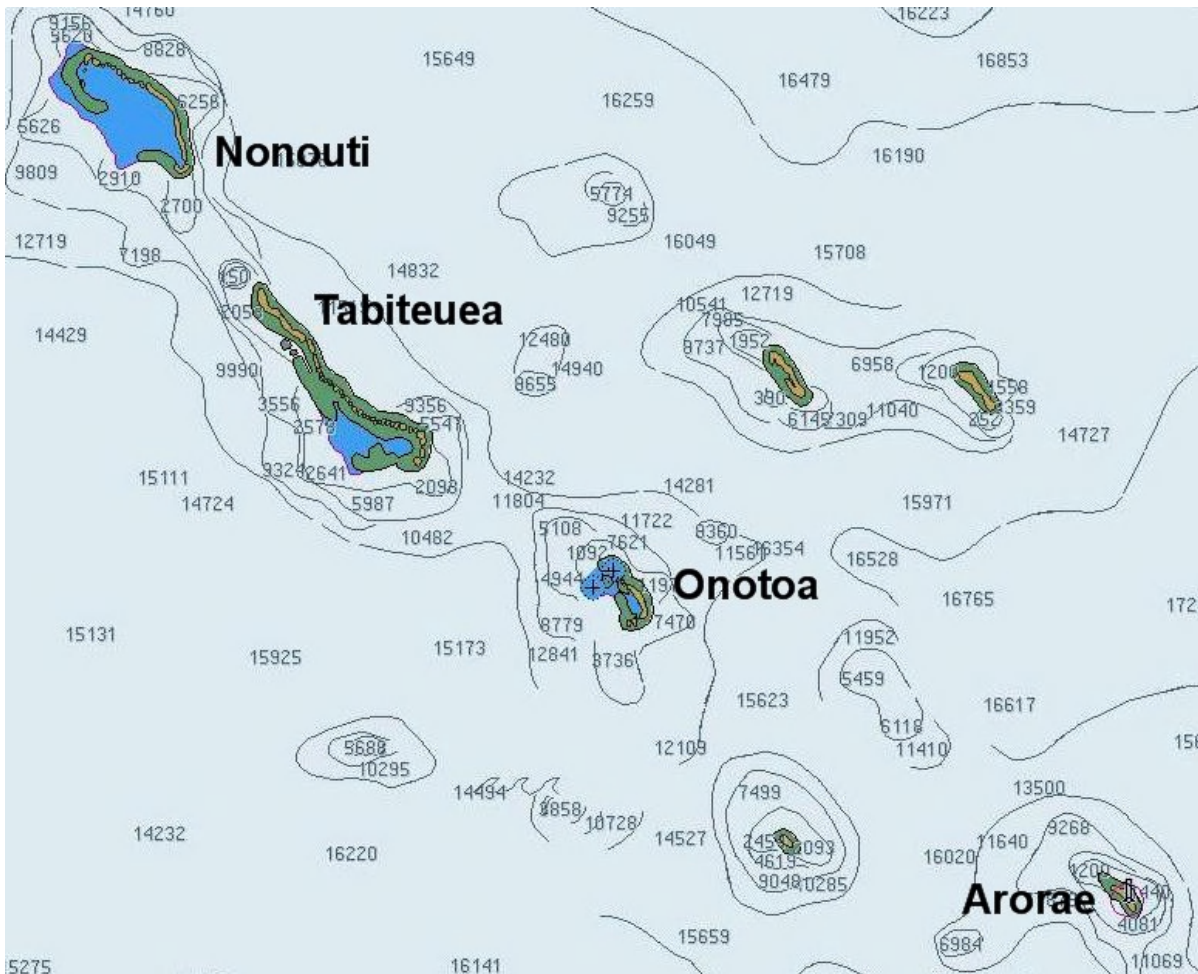
ARANUKA



If you try this, you'll be a pioneer.....

However, beware; there is a vicious current and a few obstructions in the Pass on the way in. It would be best to anchor off the pass, which is anyway the best yacht anchorage on the island and take the dinghy for a good look-see at Low Water.

FURTHER SOUTH



NONOUTI (0°40'S., 174°27'E.)

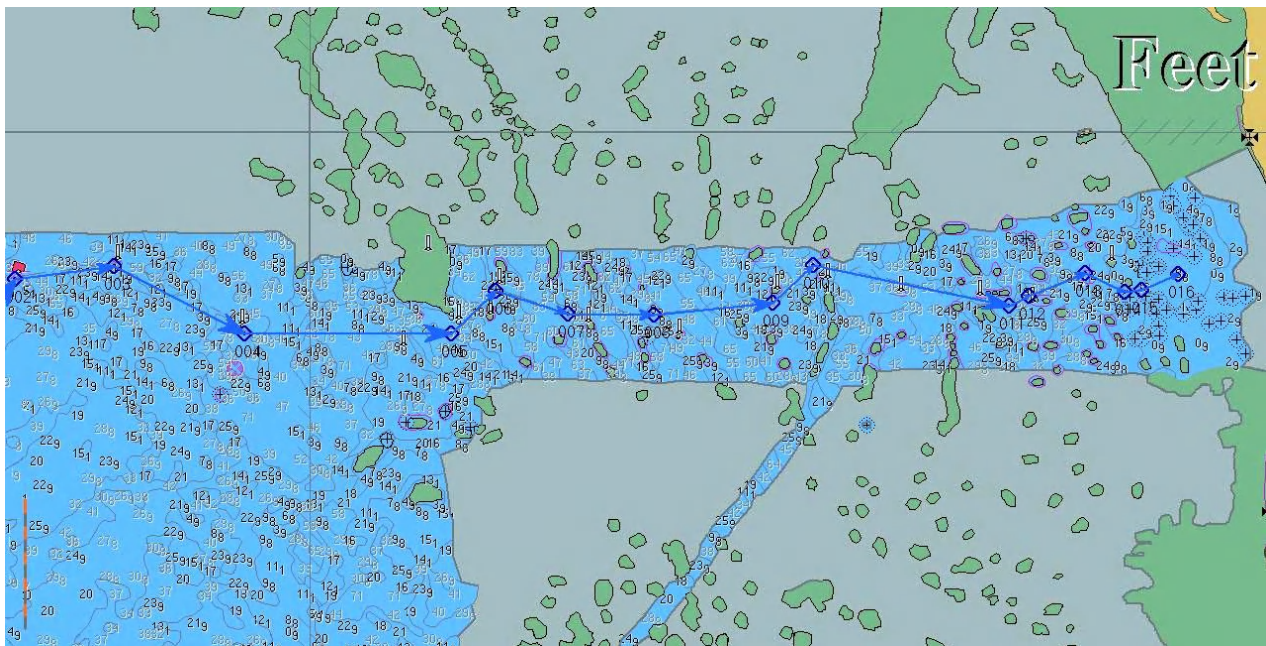
The next island south of Aranuka is Nonouti which is seldom visited by yachts due to its long and tortuous entrance. There is no real lagoon as such so protection from anything westerly is limited, there are plenty of reefs however and this dampens any seas / swells from that direction. The (semi) marked passage leads from Archer Entrance to an anchorage off the Government Wharf. They claim that vessels of 150ft in length and 13feet draft can make the passage; however that would require ‘extensive’ local knowledge.....(and a small miracle!).

Archer entrance is located about 9 miles south of the northern tip of the island and you should stay 2 miles off to the west all the way down due to the extensive reef system Offshore, along the western coast, currents may run up to 2 kts either N or S parallel to the coast.

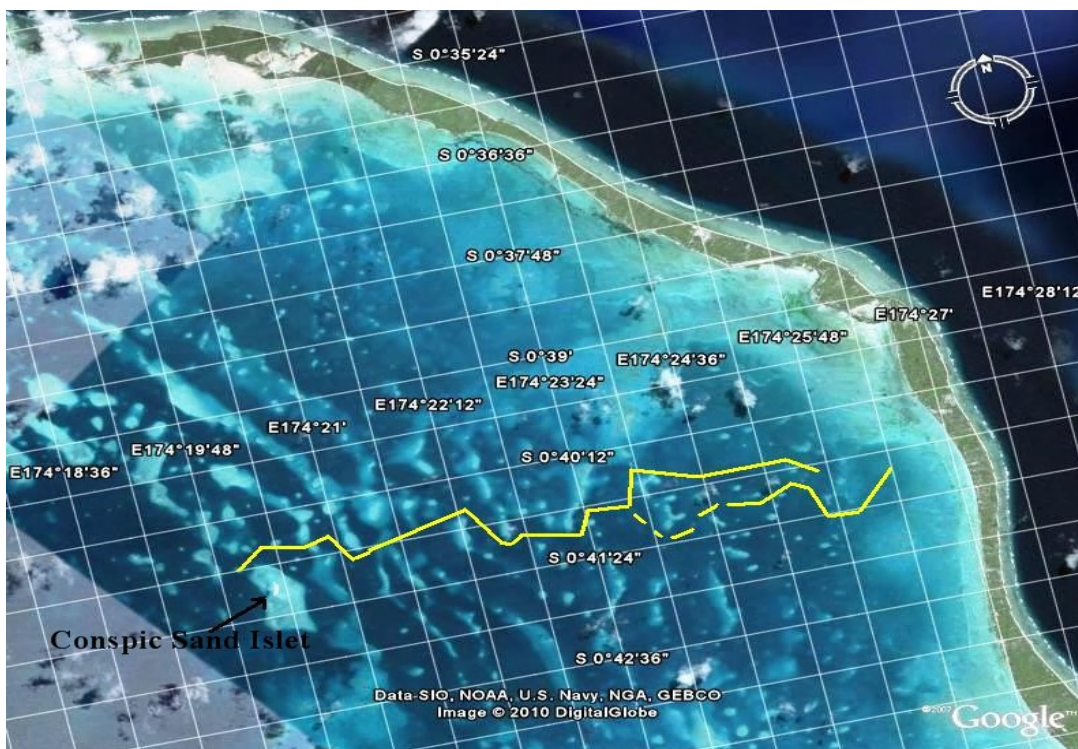
There is not a lot to see until you get close in and any of the landmarks that show up are most likely different from what is on the Admiralty Chart.

BEST bet is to load up the route below... taken from OpenCPN , head in and when you get to your first mark (not the buoy...which, if there, has probably been shifted numerous times!), establish your position and apply the Manual Offsets (Note them). As you proceed inwards adjust the offset if required; making notes where you did it and the amount applied.

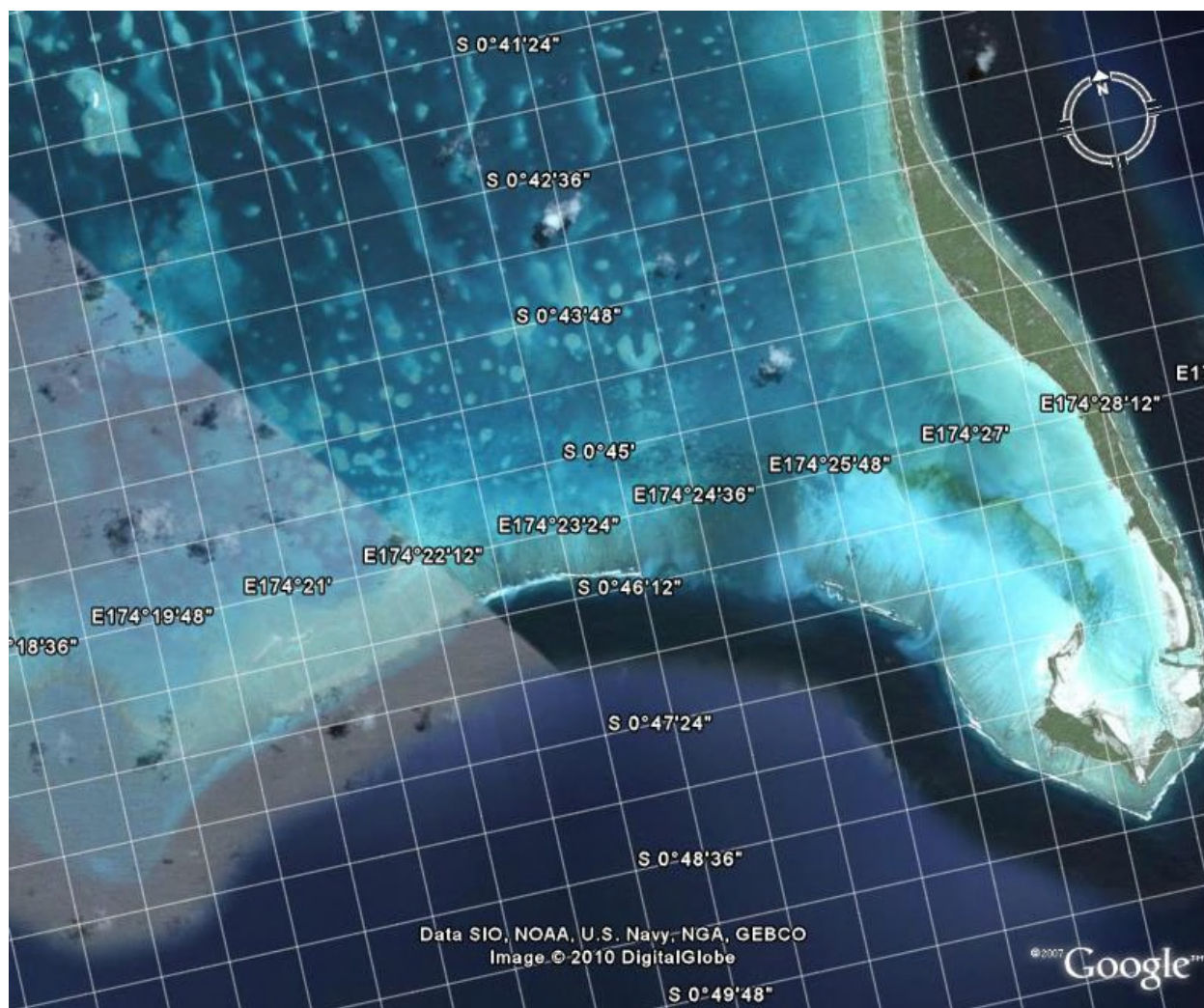
	Directions/Name	Distance	Leg Length	Leg Time	Total Time	Course	Position	Elevation
1.	001	0 ft			0:00:00		S0 42.291 E174 16.883	
2.	002	1.6 mi	1.6 mi		0:00:00	35° true	S0 41.143 E174 17.693	
3.	003	2.5 mi	0.9 mi		0:00:00	83° true	S0 41.046 E174 18.469	
4.	004	3.8 mi	1.3 mi		0:00:00	117° true	S0 41.570 E174 19.489	
5.	005	5.7 mi	1.9 mi		0:00:00	90° true	S0 41.573 E174 21.113	
6.	006	6.3 mi	0.6 mi		0:00:00	46° true	S0 41.236 E174 21.462	
7.	007	7.0 mi	0.7 mi		0:00:00	108° true	S0 41.414 E174 22.024	
8.	008	7.7 mi	0.8 mi		0:00:00	91° true	S0 41.422 E174 22.699	
9.	009	8.8 mi	1.1 mi		0:00:00	85° true	S0 41.333 E174 23.633	
10.	010	9.3 mi	0.5 mi		0:00:00	47° true	S0 41.034 E174 23.951	
11.	011	11.1 mi	1.8 mi		0:00:00	102° true	S0 41.352 E174 25.487	
12.	012	11.3 mi	0.2 mi		0:00:00	63° true	S0 41.275 E174 25.638	
13.	013	11.9 mi	0.6 mi		0:00:00	69° true	S0 41.100 E174 26.084	
14.	014	12.3 mi	0.4 mi		0:00:00	115° true	S0 41.244 E174 26.390	
15.	015	12.4 mi	0.2 mi		0:00:00	83° true	S0 41.228 E174 26.526	
16.	016	12.8 mi	0.4 mi		0:00:00	67° true	S0 41.108 E174 26.809	



The Route above should be taken as general guide of where you may find passage, This passage will almost certainly require the sun overhead but behind and a good lookout at all times. If the wind is fresh it could take you almost four hours to get in so best not to leave it too late; however there are many places on the way in that you could just anchor until there was enough light to proceed.



At the Southern end of the lagoon passage may be found in which is a little shorter and a little easier for a small yacht



TABITEUEA

This island lies about 24 miles SE of Nonouti and could be done as a day-sail if you cover the ground fast enough. The sun would be rising behind you as you leave and setting behind you as you arrive. Watch however, as some nasty over-falls and tide rips have been reported N and NW of Tabiteuea and they may appear as surf from a distance!

Peacock Anchorage, sounds great on the Admiralty Chart but means little to yachts, it's just an area way offshore where a ship may anchor with depths of 10 to 22mtrs.

Tabiteuea is actually a chain of islands and reef some 32 miles long and there are several places you can get inshore for anchoring and shelter but none of them are 'easy'!

There is a lagoon of sorts at the southern end and a passage into it marked by occasional stakes. It is said to be deep enough for 8feet of draft.....

This is Known as West Passage and it starts at a position with the north end of **Buariki** (1°28'S., 175°04'E.), bearing 254 degrees at 13.5miles. It's another tortuous trip through coral heads and 'Local Knowledge' is advised.

Whilst in this area make sure to avoid Nautilus Shoal (1°34'S., 174°55'E.) and a nasty rock, awash at LW, called The Breaker (+/-1°29'S, 174°51'E). There are other shoals around this rock, close E and SE

Another 'BOAT' passage which lies 2 miles W of **Umai Ataei** (1°33'S., 175°00'E.), the southern most islet and it starts with the islet bearing 085° and proceeds in an easterly direction.

Eanikai (1°10'S., 174°43'E.), the N island of the atoll, has several mission stations and villages. A beacon, 18m high, and a flagstaff are useful landmarks on the island.

Shoal water and breakers were sighted by a ship (1966) at a position about 12 miles S of Tabiteuea. THAT may be worth looking out for if you go S from here to Onotoa

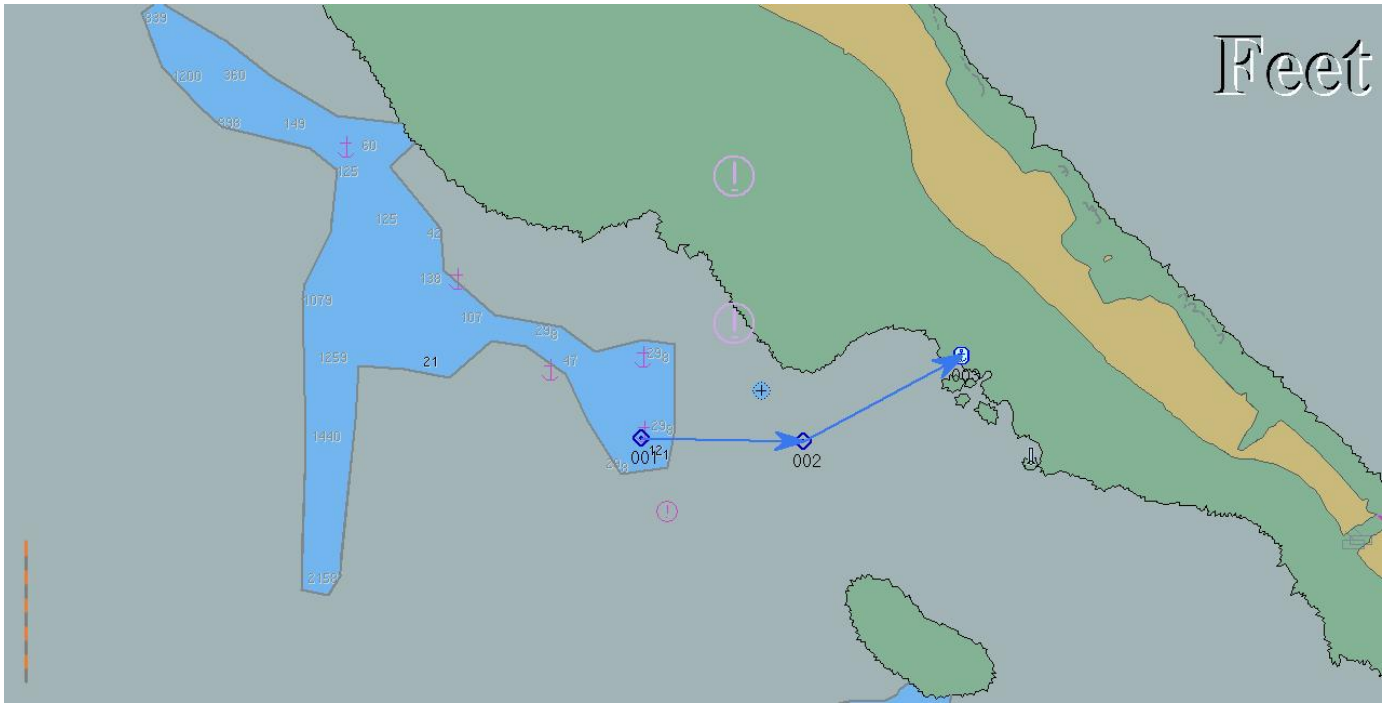
IN 2011 the yacht 'Auspice'(draft a little over 6 feet) reported anchorage off Tabiteuea at 01 12.7S 174 43.9E Apparently the water starts to shoal almost 15 miles to the east and runs down to 2 feet about 2 miles offshore. He threaded his way in "through a minefield of coral heads"! Soon after arrival two uniformed police came out to check for the permit etc.

Based on the above... here is a route from Peacock Anchorage.

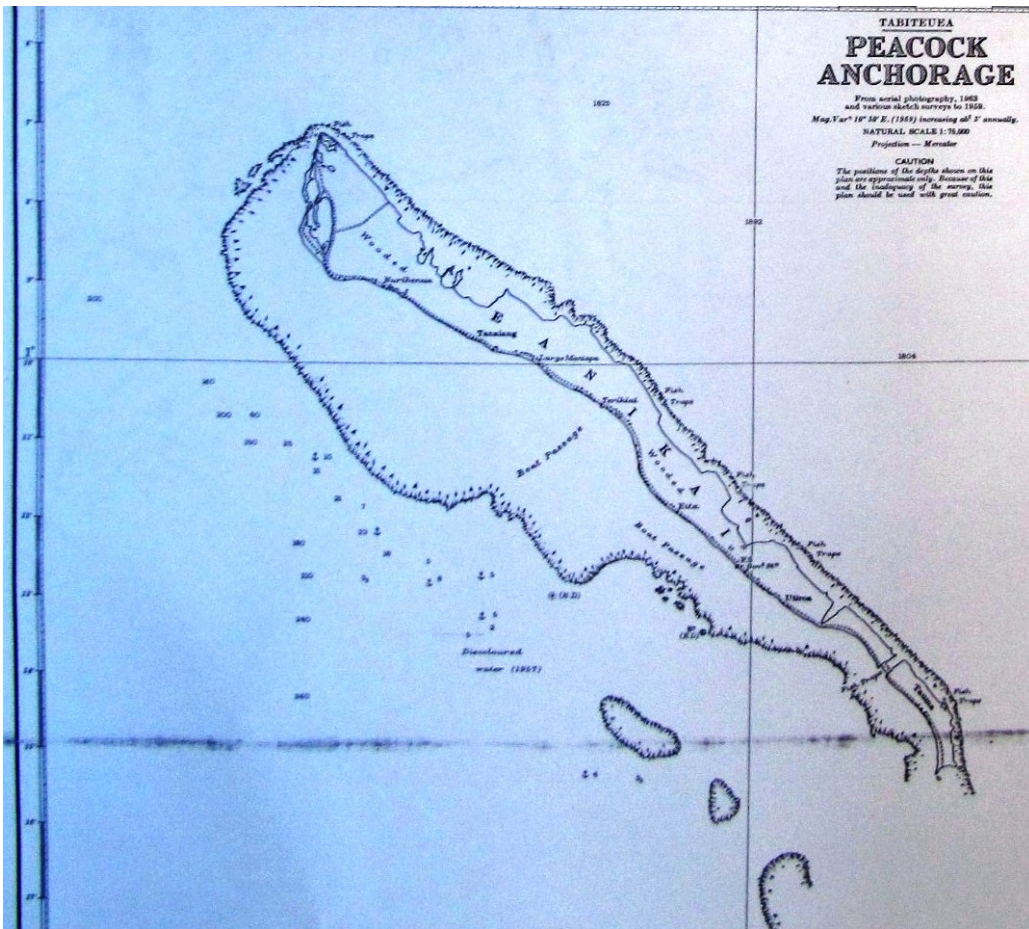
	Directions/Name	Distance	Leg Length	Leg Time	Total Time	Course	Position
1.	001	0 ft			0:00:00		S1 13.294 E174 41.597
2.	002	1.3 mi	1.3 mi		0:00:00	91° true	S1 13.317 E174 42.761
3.	003	2.8 mi	1.5 mi		0:00:00	62° true	S1 12.705 E174 43.901

This just gives a general direction.... please avoid the coral heads!

As can be seen below the charts are not a great help.....



The Admiralty didn't do much better either!



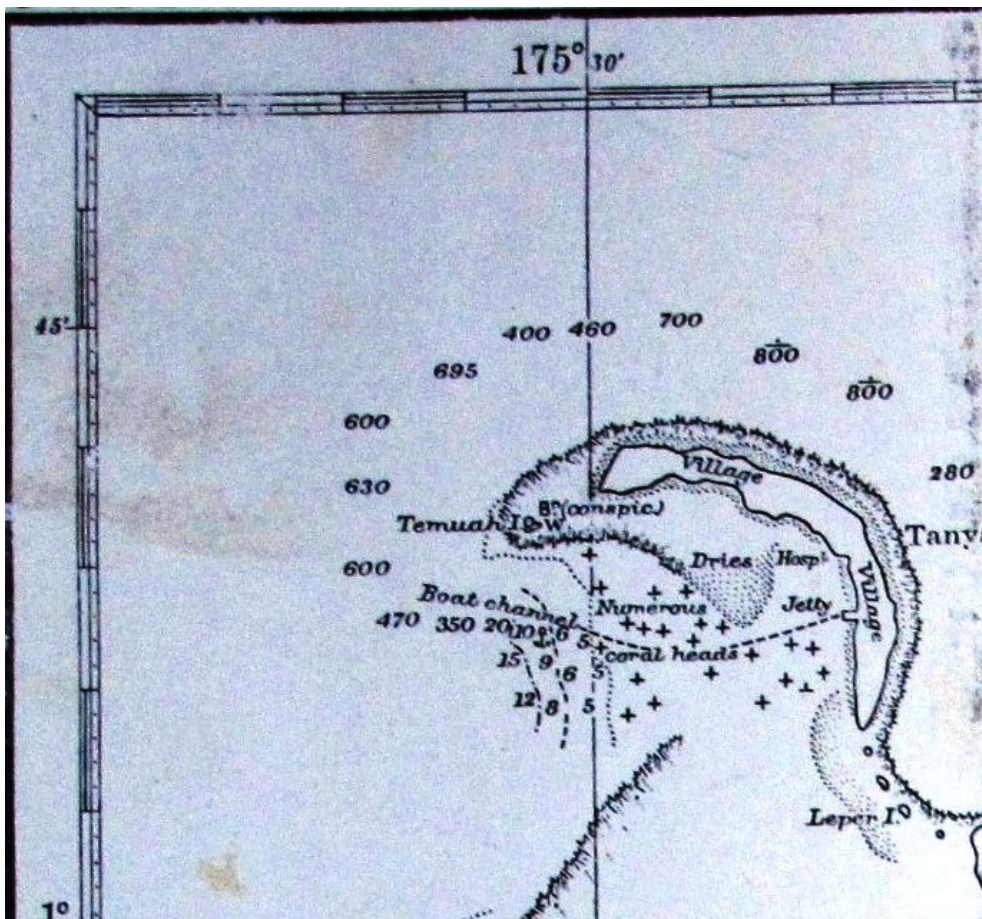
ONOTOA

This island lies about 31 miles SE of Tabitauca

At LW, it is possible to walk all the way around the islands in the lagoon so clearly you would have to real shallow in draft to get in here and you'd have to rely on the tide. You could probably find a place to anchor off but it would be roly at best.

There are two boat channels leading through the reef.

The N channel is S of **Temuah Island** ($1^{\circ}47'S.$, $175^{\circ}29'E.$) and leads to the jetty on the W side of Tanyah Island, which is the northern most island, where there is a coral rock jetty with enough water to lay afloat at all states of tide (if you have a draft of less than 6 feet). It has been reported that the N channel is hazardous.



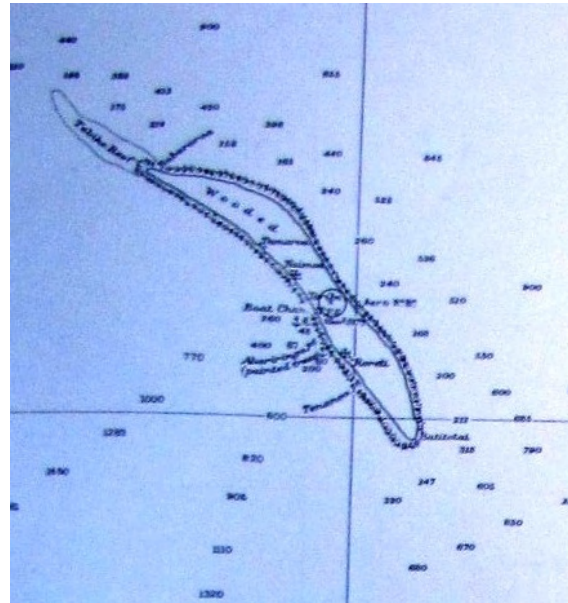
Looking at the Admiralty Chart, the north channel seems not so bad to me and I'd certainly be up to give that one a go.....

The South channel (N of the SW island), leads to the lagoon and the village on the S island. The tidal rise is about 1.8m. so if your draft is less, you may just squeeze in. There is a conspicuous stone beacon with a white top on Temuah Island, at the NW extremity of the atoll.

AROREA.....

NOT REALLY.....

For some of you that statement alone may be a good reason to try it, in which case I admire your sense of adventure!



BANABA or OCEAN ISLAND



This is no longer a port of entry and not a great place for yachts, I was here in 69 when they were going full blast with the Phosphate exports.....

Ships went on moorings close offshore and the sport of the day was watching the locals, nimbly jumping from their boats to the buoys to attend our mooring lines, whilst all the time the sharks circled waiting for one to slip off....

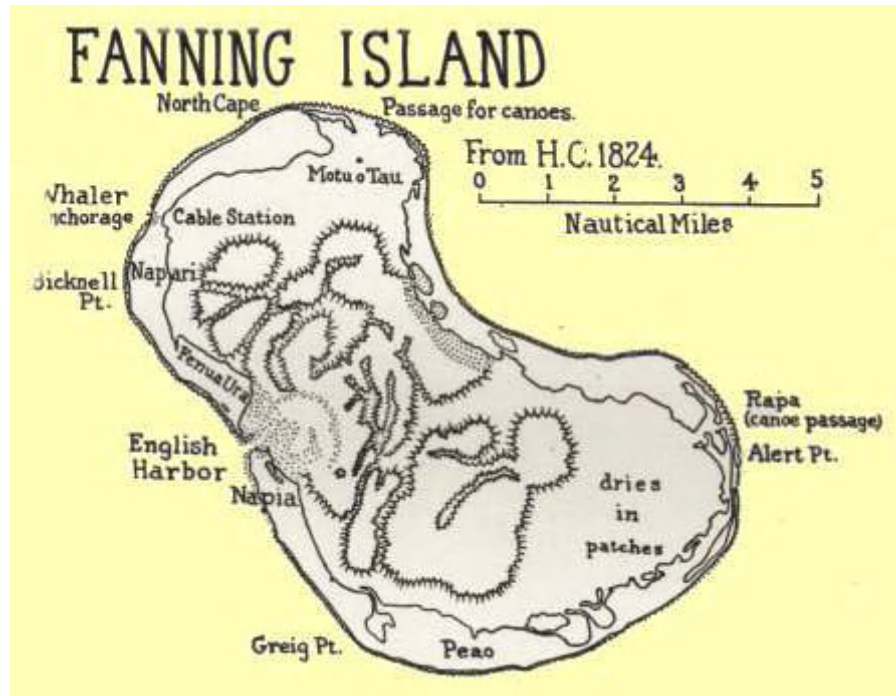
The Harbour was for the work boats and I'm not sure you would want to be in there even in calm conditions!



There is always talk about the plant starting up again and for a while there were some limited exports.... you should check the situation before going. The island has little of interest on in.... just a load of big holes where they tore the guts out with no plan of what they were going to do afterwards.....

Some of the old moorings could well be still out there... if so they could provide a temporary place to hang on.

FANNING ISLAND (Tabuaeran)



Situated at $3^{\circ}51' 36''\text{N}$ $159^{\circ}21' 52''\text{W}$. It is a relatively large ring type atoll, 11 miles long and 7 miles wide, with a total land area of 7900 acres divided into three main islands by channels, the deepest of which has a least depth of 16 feet.

The lagoon has a mean depth of 16 feet.

It lies within the equatorial convergence zone, has an average rainfall of 82 inches.

As the beautiful remote island is now part of the Republic of Kiribati, Gilbertese is the native language, art and culture of Fanning. The last population census (in 2005) estimates to 2539 people dispersed over 9 villages, the capital being called Paelau (formerly known as Napia). One of the main tourist attractions is to Catch and SURF one of the world's largest waves.... I'm not sure that

cruising yachts and surf boards should share the same wave!

CHECK OUT the following

www.deepwaterventures.com

Please contact Clerk to Fanning Island www.svkwai.com

Council for bookings and further details

Things to See & Do

[Chuck Cobbert Guesthouse](#) - overview tour of the island by truck, Email: motorbike, bicycle wdb5608@sailmail.com

Email: FHTA@sailmail.com - bird watching and camping

Website: www.fanning-island.com

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Please note I have shortened this Official version where I thought fit and have added a few comments in brackets where I thought they were needed.

1. Immigration / VISA

Visitors Permit: Visitors may apply for a visitor's permit upon arrival entitling them to stay 30days in Kiribati provided they hold a Visa (if required) and have sufficient funds for maintenance during their stay.

Extension of Visitors Permit & Cost: Visitors may request for an extension of their stay in Kiribati for an extended period of 4 months only applicable for one (1) year only and at a cost of AUD\$60.00.

Contact: Immigration Division (Head Office – Tarawa)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration (MFAI)

(Office located on Bairiki)

Tel: (+686) 21342

Fax: (+686) 21466

Email: secretary@mfa.gov.ki

bkaririki@mfa.gov.ki

2. Customs Requirements

For yachts, motor sailers & motor cruisers arriving in Kiribati waters

On entering Kiribati waters, contact Marine Radio Ch 16 on arrival. They will contact boarding party officers which include CUSTOMS to arrange clearance.

Cost of clearance:

Mon- Fri

WH 8.15am :4.15pm no charge

AH \$5-00 per customs officer per hour.

Sat- Sun \$10- per customs officer per hour.

- Clearance involves processing of crew and passengers, intercepting dangerous goods, collecting any revenues applicable and issuing or withholding clearance.

The Master is required to produce the following documents:

- Clearance from last port (Zarpe)
- Crew List and passengers
- Crew declarations
- Arms and ammunition – (may be secured on board or temporarily seized and held by police until departure.)
- Yacht particulars.

3. Quarantine Requirements

Strict quarantine laws govern the import of plants, or parts of plants, e.g. fruits, tubers, seeds, cuttings, plant products, and vegetable matter of soil, clay or earth, animals and/or animal products.

3. Health Requirements

A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required from travelers coming from infected areas. Once in the country, visitors are advised to drink boiled water. There is no pharmacy on Kiritimati Island so be sure to bring in your own supply of medicine. For your convenience there are medical clinics on the island.

4. Kiribati Entry Ports

It is a requirement under law that all yachts travelling to Kiribati must clear with the nearest entry port when. Kiribati has four (4) Entry ports.

1. Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands Group– Betio Port
2. Kiritimati Christmas Island in the Line Islands Group– Ronton (London) Port
3. Fanning Island (Tabuaeran) in the Line Islands Group
4. Kanton (Canton) in the Phoenix Islands Group

5. Yacht Way Points & Safe Anchorage

Tarawa: Anchorage is west of the Pier, amid anchored ships. It is in 15-25 ft of water with a sand bottom and good holding. The anchorage has the potential to be choppy. Do

not get too close to the atoll or the wrecks on the beach as the tide shallows quickly.

Radio Procedures: On entering Kiribati waters, contact the following on VHF range channel 16

- Port Betio Tarawa “Tarawa Radio” – Tango 3 Charlie
- Port Ronton - Kiritimati Christmas Island “Christmas Radio” – Tango 3 Charlie
- Port Fanning Island (Tabuaeran) “Fanning Radio”
- Port Kanton “Kanton Radio”

Facilities Available

Touring and Accommodation: visit the tourism office a block left from the wharf for a comprehensive guide to Tarawa and the Outer Islands

Water: water can be in short supply, however is generally available. Drinking water should be boiled. 18 Litre water bottles of pure drinking water can be purchased at the Tarawa Motors in Antanon on Teoraereke (Tarawa). For enquiries contact – Tel: 21451, Fax: 21451.

Extra info: 2011 reply to my enquiry: For your information Tarawa Motors is the only retailer in Tarawa for pure water which they offer pure water in 11litrs and 18litrs bottles and also they do refilling bottles

Price breakdown

11litrs bottle only - \$25

to refill the 11litrs bottle - \$11

Thus 11litrs bottle plu water - \$36

18litrs bottle only - \$30

to refill the 11litrs bottle - \$13

Thus 11litrs bottle plus water - \$43

Gasoline and Diesel: Both are available can be purchased in drums at the KOIL (Kiribati OilCompany Ltd.), located at the wharf in Betio on Tarawa Atoll. KOIL has also small branches located on the outer islands, Kiritimati (Christmas Island), Fanning and Kanton.

Provisions: There is a relatively good assortment of canned goods and fish is freely available. Imported fruit and vegetables are in limited supply - however local fruits and vegetables -bananas, watermelon, pumpkin, cabbage, cucumber, coconuts and breadfruit are (NOT REALLY) readily available and a lot are available on Butaritari and South Tarawa (I TAKE ISSUE WITH THAT!).

Propane: Propane or gas can be bought at KOIL in Tarawa (Betio at the wharf) and on Kiritimati Christmas Island.

Laundry: can be done at Mary's motel/Betio Apartments or by arrangement. Ask at the tourism office for more information. (AND ASK WHAT THE SALINITY OF THE WATER IS THAT THEY INTEND TO USE)

Maritime Maps: can be purchased at the Marine Guard Division (Ministry of Communications, Transport & Tourism Development). Main office located to your left from road out of the wharf. Maps are AUD\$70.00 each.

Marine Facilities (Slipway): slipway for dry docking located at the wharf in Betio is out of operation until further notice.

Outer Gilbert Islands

The KNTO recommends travelling to either Abaiang atoll or Butaritari Atoll within the Gilbert Island Group. Both atolls offer different perspectives of I-Kiribati life. butaritari (the greenest island) also has a plentiful supply of fruit and vegetables grown on the island that can be purchased by visiting travelers. More information on each island can be provided by downloading the Abaiang Atoll and Butaritari Atoll Fact Sheets.

AUTHORS NOTE

There is a ton of stuff left unsaid.....
 You could find Kiribati a perfect cruising destination....
 You may just take one quick look and leave.....

A nicer account of our time is available on our web page /
 Blog....if you wish to wade through it.
 If you are really into it, you could write and ask my wife
 about her fantastic DVD.....

This is only a guide at best and whatever you do here you
 should do with caution, always have the sun high and
 behind you, wear Polaroid's and look where you are going.

I must say, if Kiribati were closer I'd go again BUT going
 north for the Hurricane Season is not something I'd want to
 repeat. It was harder work than I thought it would be!

Many thanks to all those who gave input to this guide..
Google of course.....the best thing since the GPS.
 All our yachty friends: Patrick and Rebecca off Brick
 House, Jim and Kim off Auspice and others....and The
 Kiribati Tourist Office.

Also all those that went before, where I shamelessly stole
 all your best info and inserted it here.....
 THIS document is available FREE all over. There is no
 charge, thus copy write does not apply....I hope this
 information helps you out and you have a really good
 cruise where ever you go

A little background about The Author:

John and Paula Wolstenholme with “Mr John VI” in the Bahamas



Early days with “Mr John” in Vilamoura - 1979 various cruises – UK and the western Med



“Mr John II”, a Sigma 33C, did four Atlantic crossings in the early 80’s Cruising the Caribbean and U.S. E. Coast.



“Mr John III”, a Sigma 36, was the bigger sister of “No. II” did one Atlantic, UK to Rhode Island on the northern route then cruised the NE Coast of the U.S.A.



“Mr John IV”, a UFO34, took us into the Pacific, and an eleven year circumnavigation (via the Suez Route).



“Mr John V” was a 40ft Steel Cutter that we bought in Durban SA, sailed up to the Caribbean, across to Europe; back to the Caribbean, the U.S. east coast and eventually sold in Annapolis.