

Tagaloa's Rock

*A myth from Samoa, in
the South Pacific*



 **Tagaloa made the sky.** It was high and wide, bright and clear. 'I like it!' said Tagaloa.

Tagaloa made the sea. It was deep and dark, mighty and mysterious. 'Amazing!' said Tagaloa.

Tagaloa soared through the air, flying up, up, up to see more.

• *Tagaloa: (say) 'tag uh low ah!'* 37



Tagaloa swam through the sea, diving down, down, down to explore.

Tagaloa was pleased with the world he had made: 'It's wonderful!' he said.



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At first, the rock was smoking hot. Foul-smelling gases swirled round it. But soon it cooled, and the air around it cleared. Tagaloa nodded, approvingly.

'Ha! The first island in the world,' he said. 'Welcome, dry land, welcome!'



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The island was so good that Tagaloa wanted more. 'I could use them to stride across the sea,' he said to himself. 'They'd be like stepping-stones.'

Before long, he'd made them. Hundreds and hundreds.

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A rocky island is a great resting place for a god, but it needs something to cover it. So Tagaloa made green, leafy, creeping plants – and water to keep them growing. With his huge right hand, he smashed into the cliff on the side of his first island.

'Make me a river!' he commanded.

With a deafening **CRAAASSSH!** the cliff split in two, and cool water came gushing out.



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Next – **CRRRUMCH, CRRRRACK!** Tagaloa jumped up and down on his island's highest mountains. 'I'm sorry to squash you,' he said. 'But I must make some flat land where my new trees and plants can grow.'

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Before long, the flat land was covered in trees and plants. They grew tall, had flowers, and wilted. Then, as their rotten leaves fell to the ground, strange worm-like creatures crawled out of them.

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'Ho! What are these?' asked Tagaloa, surprised and very curious. He picked some up, turned them over, and sniffed them, thoughtfully.

'Hmm! Well ... they look interesting. They have definite possibilities. All they need is a head, and two arms, and two legs ...'



Tagaloa got busy.

After a while, he paused, scratched his head, and muttered, 'I must not be too hasty. They will need more than bodies to survive. Now, let me think carefully ...'

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'Each one must have strength. (I'll put that in their hearts.) And a lively mind. (I'll make sure they've got good brains.) And spirit ... and energy ... I'll give them some of mine! That should help. I'm a god. I have plenty. Then I'll send them all, to live and work and love, on my splendid new rocky islands.'

And that – so the stories say – is how the first men and women came to live on Tagaloa's rock, and all other dry land.

Today, you can still see Tagaloa's islands. They are far, far away from other countries, in the middle of the vast Pacific Ocean. You may have heard some of their names, such as Samoa, Tonga and Fiji.



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