

Most islanders are farmers. Many tropical food crops such as sweet potatoes, cassava and coconuts grow well; sugar-cane, bananas and pineapples are important exports. And, with so much sea,

fishing is also important. Islands big enough for a full-sized airport, such as Fiji, the Samoan islands, Tahiti, and Hawaii (see page 72), now have tourists coming to enjoy the beautiful beaches.



▲ **Easter Island, South Pacific.** These huge stone sculptures each weigh about 50 tonnes! They were cut long ago with simple stone axes, and lifted with ropes and ramps – an amazing achievement for people who had no metal, no wheels and no machines. Look for Easter Island on the map (in square U11): it is one of the most remote places in the world. It is now owned by Chile, 3860 kilometres away in South America.



PACIFIC FACTS

- OCEAN AREA** 155,557,000 sq km – the world's biggest ocean
- HIGHEST POINT** Mount Wilhelm (Papua New Guinea), 4508 metres
- LOWEST POINT ON LAND** Lake Eyre (Australia), 16 metres below sea level
- DEEPEST PART OF OCEAN** Mariana Trench, 11,022 metres below surface. This is the deepest place on Earth.
- LONGEST RIVER** Murray–Darling (Australia), 3750 km
- LARGEST LAKE** Lake Eyre (Australia), 8900 sq km
- BIGGEST COUNTRY** Australia, 7,741,220 sq km
- SMALLEST COUNTRY** Nauru, 21 sq km

Most Pacific countries are large groups of small islands. Their boundaries are out at sea – just lines on a map. For example, Kiribati is 33 small coral atolls spread over 5,000,000 square kilometres of ocean.