

21. Culture

Solomon Islanders has dozens of 'cultural zones', each with variations of ornamentation, musical instruments, dancing, and material culture items. Today, Solomon Islanders present their traditional cultures through dance and song in villages, on church, provincial and national occasions, at family and customary events, and sometimes nightly at hotels for tourist entertainment. Ornamentation is created with natural products: mainly shell, wood, fibre and stone. These artefacts are complex and beautiful, often using nautilus shell inlay. Today, there have been adaptations to dances at hotels, which owe as much to the cultures of Micronesia and other areas of Polynesian as to the Solomon Islands. New fashions develop, such as *bilums*, a style of woven string bag from neighbouring Papua New Guinea, which has taken off in the Solomons in the last decade. Artefacts are adapted and produced for tourists.

Cultural festivals have been held since the 1960s. The largest ever was the Festival of South Pacific Arts in 2012, which showcased cultures from all over the Pacific.



21.1. Santa Cruz man in traditional dress, at the 10th anniversary of Solomon Islands independence, Honiara, 1988. (Mike McCoy Collection)



21.2. Malaitan women wearing traditional ornaments, while two Malaitan men hold up strings of shell wealth, Festival of South Pacific Arts, Honiara, 2012. (Pei-Yi Guo Collection)



21.3. Traditional girls dance, as part of guest welcoming, Turarana village, Guadalcanal, 1988.(Mike McCoy Collection)



21.4–5. Gilbert Islanders (iKiribati) from Micronesia were part of a British-organised migration to Solomon Islands in the 1950s and 1960s. They are now well integrated, but have preserved their culture, often in modern form, as with these dancers at the King Solomon Hotel in Honiara, 2005. (Clive Moore Collection)



21.6. The '*Bilum* Tree' in Honiara, 2009, where women hung their woven string baskets for sale. These string bags, made by a process known as looping, knotless netting or crocheting, are an adaption of a fashion from Papua New Guinea. (Clive Moore Collection)



21.7. Malaitan shell valuables are hung, along with bank notes, as a wealth transaction at the marriage of a bride, 2011. The father of the bride is preparing to make a speech. (Clive Moore Collection)



21.8. `Are` are pan pipe dancers from Malaita, in Honiara, 1995. (Clive Moore Collection)



21.9. A wall carving at Honiara Hotel, 2008. The carving depicts two Keoko, mythical sea creatures, and a turtle. (Clive Moore Collection)

21.10. A student at Betikama Seventh Day Adventist School, Honiara, working on a carving, 2002. (Clive Moore Collection)



21.11. Isobel Province dancers on Independence Day, 2005. They are playing large pan pipes and also a bamboo percussion instrument which is struck with thongs (rubber slippers). (Clive Moore Collection)



21.12. Necklaces made from Malaitan shell valuables on display at the Festival of South Pacific Arts, Honiara, 2012. (Pei-Yi Guo Collection)



21.13. Solomon Islands now has many painters who express traditional stories in new mediums. This large painting was displayed outside the entrance to the National Museum, 2006. It depicts playing musical instruments and an exchange of shell wealth. (Clive Moore Collection)



21.14. In 2006, there were two cultural projects at the National Museum. One was to build traditional houses from each of the provinces, and the other was to carve large statues from tree trunks. This carving was on display outside the Rennell and Bellona Province house. (Clive Moore Collection)