



THE ISLANDS *of*
TAHITI

SOCIETY ISLANDS | TUAMOTU ISLANDS | GAMBIER ISLANDS | MARQUESAS ISLANDS | AUSTRAL ISLANDS



WELCOME TO THE ISLANDS OF TAHITI

Have you ever dreamed of a lush world of sun drenched landscapes that appear right before your eyes when you step off the plane? On *The Islands of Tahiti*, the air is full of alluring dreaminess. An explosion of colors dazzles your eyes as you scan verdant valleys, azure skies and turquoise lagoons. The multi-colored *pāreu* (skirts) of the *vahine* (women) contrast with their hair, bathed in the raw tropical sunlight.

Tahiti, Moorea, Huahine, Raiatea, Taha'a, Bora Bora and Maupiti are high and mystical islands with deep valleys perfumed by the *tiare* (Tahitian flower), short-lived jewels that one wears over the ear. Rangiroa, Manihī, Fakarava, Tikehau - atolls at the end of the world, these "pearl islands" enclose in their jewelry-box lagoons the blue depths where Tahitian cultured pearls are cultivated.

From the north to the south, from the fertile plains of the Australs Islands to the majestic spires of the Marquesas Islands, these fragrant paradises reveal the diversity and richness of Mother Nature. The beaches, forests and mountains of these faraway islands, whether laid with golden-hued sands or fringed with mysterious basalt monoliths, tell an ancient story that was a millennium in the making.

The Islands of Tahiti, with its ancestral culture and the indivisible link between man and nature, is a refuge for those who seek a preserved and isolated destination. Focusing on quality over quantity, let yourself be seduced by an authentic experience discovering French Polynesia through its inhabitants and in harmony with nature.

Everything here whispers the legends of the *mā'ohi* people who discovered these verdant lands, where the *'uru* (breadfruit), the *fē'i* (wild banana), and the *taro* thrive... these generous islands whisper to us,
Mānava! Welcome!





SOCIETY ISLANDS

Tahiti, Moorea, Bora Bora... These names sound like an invitation to a dream. Discovering them will enchant the most discerning traveler... This archipelago is also home to other islands not as famous but nonetheless as mesmerizing such as **Tetiaroa**, movie star Marlon Brando's mythical atoll, but also **Huahine, Raiatea, Taha'a** and **Maupiti**. Here and there, mountains proudly overlook bright blue lagoons, surrounded by *motu* (tiny islets), small coral crowns offering a lush green vegetation in their center and white sandy beaches flirting with the ocean. The depths of the crystal blue water reveal even more treasures. Every island of the Society Islands unveils a legacy, a living culture ever evolving, authentic encounters and an invaluable art of living in harmony within an unspoiled environment. Pure natural luxury, at all times...



SOCIETY ISLANDS

IN TAHITI,

after a swim in the refreshing “big ocean”, you will enjoy the delightful warmth of black sand while lying in the sun on the beach of Matavai, Mahina or Popoti close to the Taharu'u river in Papara. Enter the center of the island for a hike, take an exhilarating ride on an e-bike, or go on a 4x4 ride across the lush Papeno'o Valley which hides mysterious *marae* (sacred temple sites) along streams and rivers, waterfalls and water slides, deep natural pools; so many options for sports and activities to enjoy.



THE LAGOON OF MOOREA,

Tahiti's sister island, pristine and secluded, unveils a bright range of shades of blue where rays happily come to greet swimmers. Located between the ocean and mountains, the 18-hole technical golf course of Tema'e offers amazing and scenic views of mountain ridges and the fringing reef. The bay of Paopao is nearly circled by a rocky fortress, pierced here and there as if giant warriors had tried to destroy it with their magical spears. At sunset, mountains look like they are set on fire inspiring many local painters, whose work is exhibited in the island's various art galleries.

THEN, A FEW MILES FROM MOOREA... HOW CAN ONE DESCRIBE REALISTICALLY BORA BORA?

Crowned by Mount Otemanu, glorified by the sunset and standing is the calm waters of the world's most beautiful lagoon, Bora Bora is a sparkling jewel in the South Pacific. Experience the luxury of intimate seclusion in the world, in paradise, in the sweet, private and romantic comfort of an overwater villa where time disappears...

AND IF YOU CHOOSE HUAHINE,

the mountain range of Huahine conjures the languorous and voluptuous curves of a reclining woman and invites travelers to explore. Mystical Huahine enlivens of feeling of respect and awe where visitors are invited to discover the cultural Polynesian wisdom on the archeological sites of Maeva or follow the legendary footsteps of hero and demi-god Hiro-ā-Moeterāuri, the famous navigator of Polynesian lore.

RAIATEA,

a sacred island where lies Te-Pō, the most important and internationally renowned cultural center of the Polynesian Triangle with Taputapuātea *marae*, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2017. Every year, this location hosts cultural ceremonies gathering people from all over the Polynesian triangle. Raiatea is also home to the unique, extremely rare and very protected *tīare 'āpetahi* flower. This endangered flower is endemic of the Temēhani mountain plateau.

VANILLA IS QUEEN AMONG THE DELICIOUS SWEET SCENTS OF TAHA'A

and its refined fragrance takes you on a discovery journey of an authentic, timeless island from another world...

MAUPITI,

is also known as the island of stone carvers, famous throughout the Polynesian triangle for their quality two head pestles, which were proudly worn by important tribal chiefs, also called *ari'i nui*, as a sign of prestige. At the top of Mount Te'urafa'atiu, emotions fill you while looking at such amazing scenery. Maupiti is the mythical but real "island at the edge of the world". In Maupiti, treat yourself with the luxury of a private swim, alone, on Terei'a's white sandy beach.

The **Raromāta'i** Islands or Windward Islands are also a sailing paradise. Navigation from one island to the other, or in the lagoon, is easy and safe providing visitors with a different but nonetheless authentic approach to these islands in a spectacular marine and land environment.



TUAMOTU ISLANDS

The Tuamotu Islands hold a promise: they are the perfect incarnation of the edge of the world and paradise on Earth. These coral-encrusted treasures lying between sky and ocean mesmerize visitors with the radiant beauty of their lagoons with vivid and iridescent blue and green colors. The wide variety of marine life make these coral rings exceptional places to dive. It is not uncommon to see the islanders here live as a community where values of sharing and solidarity are part of a common spirit in a place surrounded by the big ocean, a generous food provider but also sometimes cruel and merciless. Exploring the Tuamotu Islands is an experience of a Polynesian way of life at the pace of the sun, the moon, the wind and tides... Far from it all...



RANGIROA

is the second largest atoll worldwide and the most populated of the 76 atolls making it the largest archipelago of French Polynesia. Her huge Blue Lagoon – referred to as “a lagoon ocean” – offers numerous options of excursions and world-class dive spots. Thus, Hiria Pass close to Tiputa Village shelters impressive hammerhead sharks and a resident pod of bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*). The latter dance alongside divers and are believed to be the reincarnation of deified ancestors protecting the island, according to the tradition. Incredible but true, there is also a vineyard on the atoll where a delicious wine is produced. The average temperature of 27°C makes it an unusual vineyard to be discovered on an outrigger canoe ride between lagoon and coconut trees. It is the most unlikely event in the middle of nowhere.

THE ATOLL OF MANIHI

is a perfect place to discover the Tahitian cultured pearl. Discover the secret of the mother of pearl, farmed and hand grafted, giving birth to the Tahitian cultured pearl, the *vahine's* essential accessory. This luxurious and exotic gem is displayed in the world's most prestigious jewelers' shop windows.

Under the crystal clear waters where the immaculate white of the sand merges with a rich underwater ecosystem, a snorkeling trip allows one to explore traditional coral built fish traps such as those of Temarie in '**Anaa** or **Fakarava's** lagoon, protected and part of the UNESCO's biosphere reserves thanks to the wide variety of its marine life and where one wonders at the unspoiled and untouched diving sites.



THE TUAMOTU ISLANDS

are an important source of agriculture for the local islanders, including people on the main island of Tahiti. The lagoons, as well as the huge ocean surrounding them, host many fish, shellfish – endemic to some islands – and crustaceans of all sorts for the delight of all taste buds once cooked and prepared by the *Pa'umotu* using various recipes. Captain Jacques-Yves Cousteau once referred to **Tikehau's** lagoon as the home of the largest number of fish in French Polynesia.

GAMBIER ISLANDS

It is the furthest archipelago of *The Islands of Tahiti* but worth the trip. The islands of **Mangareva**, **Akamaru**, **Aukena** and **Taravai** feature unexpected sceneries, very different from the other islands of Tahiti. They offer a mystical atmosphere, a strong genuine culture and a rich architectural and historical heritage very unusual from what one would expect to discover on the other side of the world...

Known as the cradle of Polynesian Catholicism thanks to the first missionary settlers in the early 19th century, the islands host hundreds of monuments, sites and remnants of religious buildings nested in a lush environment. The most iconic of all is without a doubt the magnificent Saint Michel Cathedral in Rikitea. This impressive work, original construction having been completed in 1848, was entirely renovated in 2011. Both exterior and interior architectural details are surprising and moving. The fine woodwork inlaid with white mother of pearl and yellow gold matches the delicate beauty of the altar carved in coral marble blocks.



The remnants of “Domaine du Roi Maputeoa” (Domain of King Maputeoa) lie near the lagoon. The former island chief, also a colorful character, cultured and intelligent, only practiced Christian faith for a couple of years after the missionaries’ arrival. After giving it some thought, he finally did not carry on... Among other monuments and sites, his mausoleum, ironically called “Les Invalides des Gambier”^{*} by the missionaries, is open to the public as well as his turtle farm, fish traps and his home “Marau Tagaroa”, renamed “the Mangarevan Versailles”.



The beauty of Mangareva's lagoon is best admired from its highest peak, Mount Duff, via easy access through a slightly winding trail along lush slopes. The “Gates to Heaven” then open to magnificent scenery of islands and atolls lying on crystal clear waters.

This pristine lagoon reflects the pure skies of Mangarevan Gods such as Tagaroa, Tū or Rao. It is home to a unique - and bigger in size - mother of pearl species. Very sought-after on the international markets, they are classified as the most beautiful pearls of *The Islands of Tahiti*.



^{*} In reference to the « Invalides » monument in Paris where some of the country's French war heroes are buried.



ACCOMODATION

LUXURY RESORTS

The Islands of Tahiti offer visitors a wide range of accommodation for every budget. At the top end of the spectrum are the luxurious, five-star resorts owned by international hotel companies, where vacationers can enjoy the tranquility and gentle pace of the islands and their beautiful, turquoise lagoons. One local specialty is the overwater bungalow. Built on stilts directly over the lagoon, guests can watch colorful fish through glass panels in the bungalow floor. Each of these resorts offers clients a wide range of activities, from cultural visits and water sports to traditional massages and spas. A delightful culinary experience awaits visitors at the restaurants of these top hotels, from talented chefs blend local flavors with French or Asian influences.



TAHITIAN GUESTHOUSES

More affordable than the large resorts, the Tahitian Guesthouses give visitors the opportunity to experience a warm Polynesian welcome as well as a glimpse of traditional daily life. Brimming with local color and character these bed and breakfast, holiday family homes, family run guest houses and family hotels offer family style cooking and the chance to appreciate the spirit of sharing and generosity that remains a core value in Polynesian culture.

CHARTER BOATS

Exploring *The Islands of Tahiti* by boat is magical-few visitors forget the sight of the imposing silhouette of a high island fringed with coral reef. Numerous charter companies offer sailboats for hire, providing an ideal way for families and groups to combine lodging and transport while discovering *The Islands of Tahiti*. There are also several luxury cruises boats which offer thematic vacations for small groups.

CRUISE SHIPS

Some of the world's most prestigious cruise companies operate in *The Islands of Tahiti's* waters. Aboard one of these luxury vessels, passengers discover *The Islands of Tahiti* at a relaxed pace, with regular stopovers providing opportunities for exploration on shore.

VACATION RENTALS

From cozy cottages to luxury villas, vacation rentals are another possible category of accommodation with a wide choice on some islands like Tahiti and Moorea. You can refer to professional local vacation rental agencies to help you choose the right accommodation according to your needs and budget.



AGENDA

FEBRUARY

- FIFO TAHITI - INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF OCEANIC DOCUMENTARY FILM

Documentary film showings, Pacific television conference, digital encounters and round table discussions, international pitch, workshops for amateurs and professionals, "Short film night" at the Cultural Center "Te Fare Tauhiti Nui".

Contact: organisation@filmfestivaloceanie.org - www.fifotahiti.org

APRIL

- TATTOO CONVENTION - POLYNESIA TATAU TAHITI

The association of all Polynesian tattoo artists from *The Islands of Tahiti*, the Pacific region and even internationally meet annually.

Contact: polynesiataatafest@gmail.com

- TAHITI PEARL REGATTA RAIATEA, TAHA'A, BORA BORA

Sailing-race between Raiatea, Taha'a and Bora Bora, opened to all types of sailboats for all nationalities and combines ocean courses with lagoon competitions, accompanied with friendly and festive evenings on motu or in major hotels.

Contact: communication@tahitipearlregatta.com - www.tahitipearlregatta.com



© Gregory Batsky

JULY

- HEIVA I TAHITI

The best singing and dance groups compete on the iconic stage of *To'atā* and rival with creativity to showcase tahitian traditions in the most festive and authentic ways. This contest, founded in 1881, brings artists and audiences together to share a very intense entertainment experience.

During the day, the lower piazza welcomes traditional handcraft artists showcasing their mastery of know-how through their most gracious and creative works. The *tū'aro mā'ohi* - traditional sports, are also in the spotlight with dugout races, fruit-carrying races, javelin throws or stone-carrying.

Contact: communication@maisondelaculture.pf - www.maisondelaculture.pf



AUGUST

- TAHITI PRO TEAHUPOO

An international competition where the best surfers in the world compete on the imposing wave of Teahupoo in Tahiti.

Contact: fedesurf@live.fr - www.federation-surf-tahiti.com



NOVEMBER

- HAWAIKI NUI VA'A HUAHINE, RAIATEA, TAHAA, BORA BORA

Va'a or outrigger canoe is the ultimate traditional sport. Over 100 outriggers will race from Huahine to Raiatea, Taha'a and to Bora Bora. The mythical arrival of the race at Matira point in Bora Bora is unreal and definitely a once in a lifetime experience.

Contact: ftvtutu@gmail.com

- HURA TAPIAIRU TAHITI

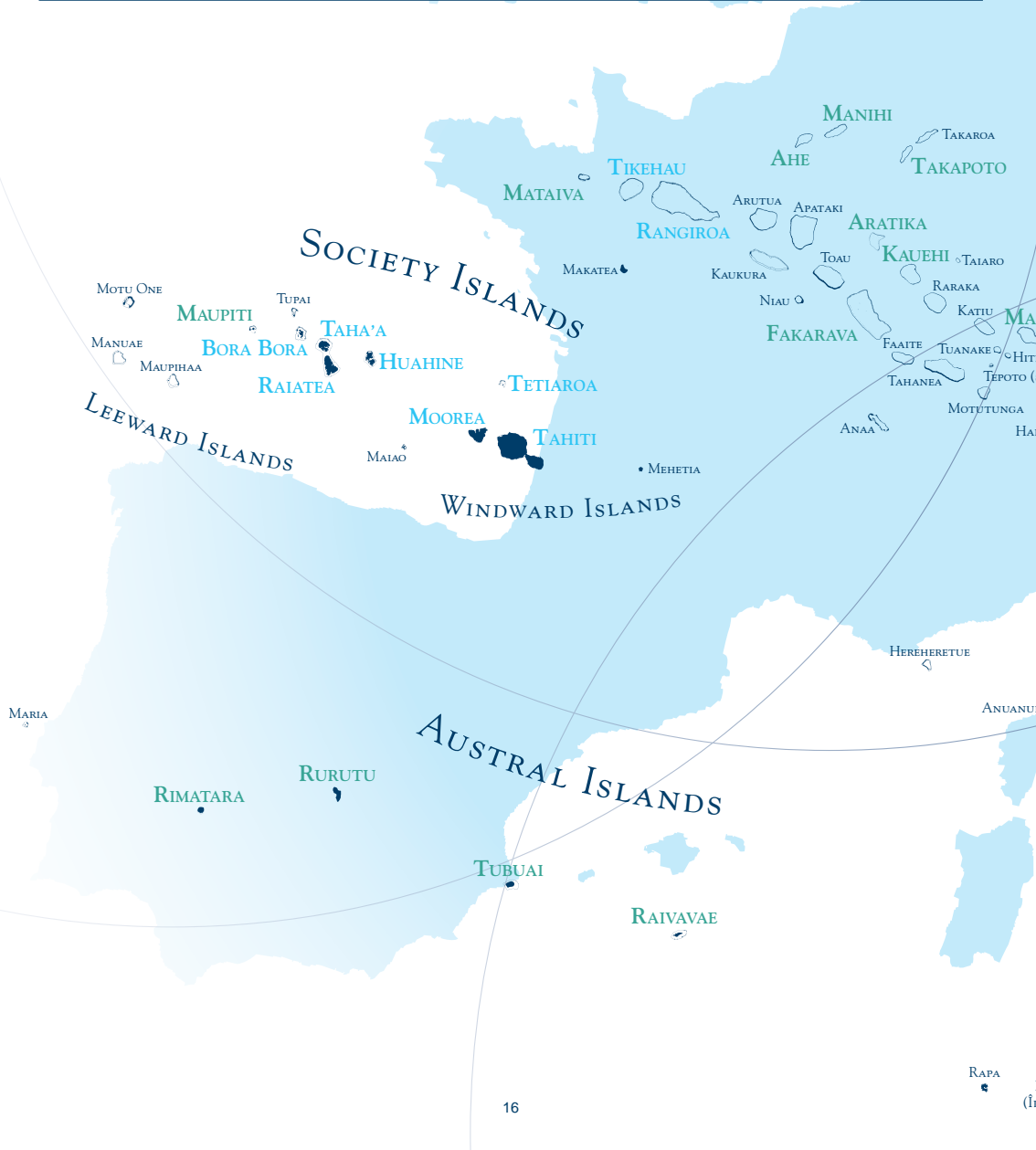
From professional dance groups to amateur groups, each year several participants compete and showcase their creativity, their grace and the strength of this living dance in constant evolution. For the past few editions, the Hura Tapairu Manihini competition, reserved for foreign troupes, has become part of the program. In 2019, the 15th edition of the competition brought together 31 groups in 38 formations, including two from Mexico, one from Japan and one from the United States.

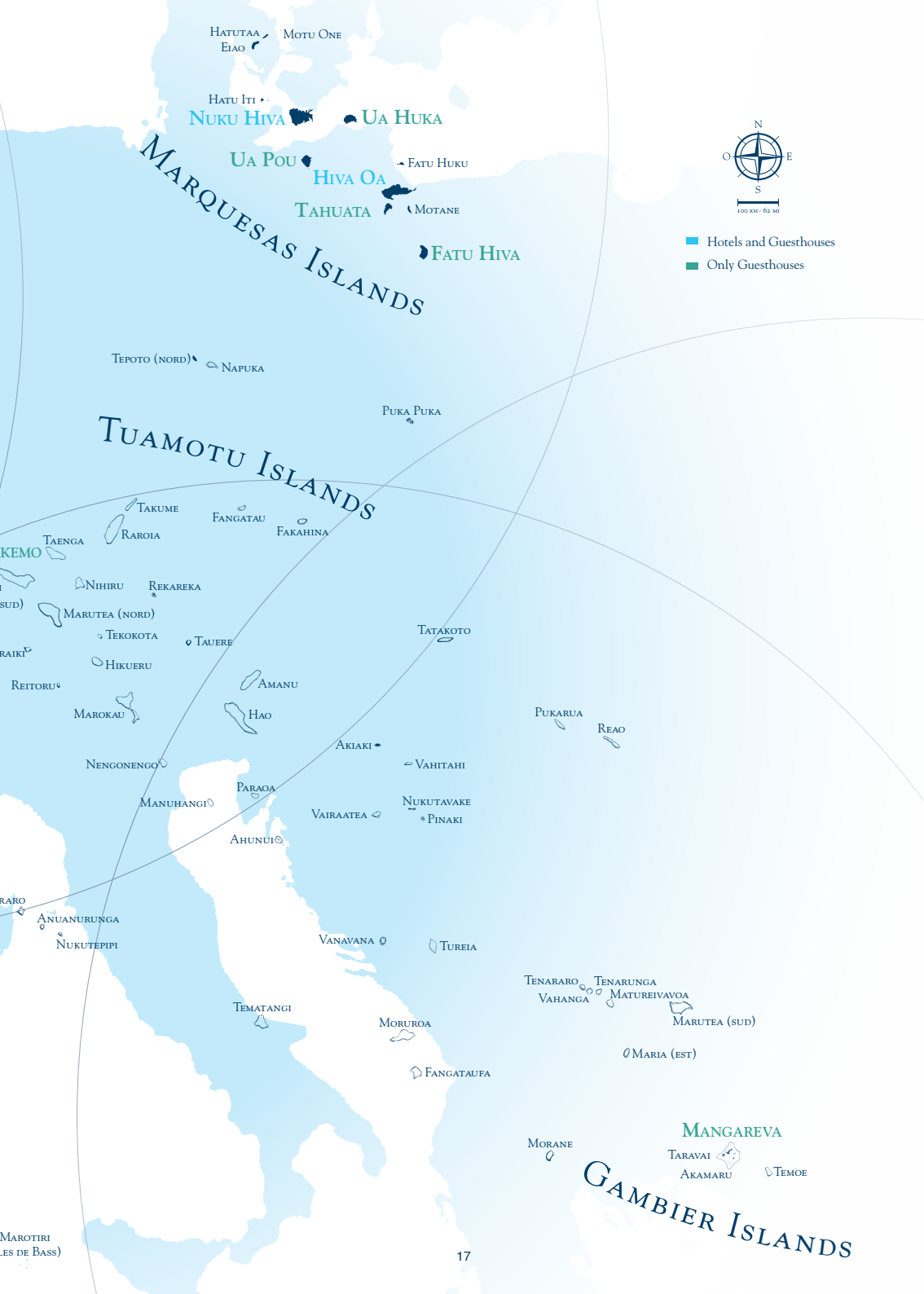
Contact: communication@maisondelaculture.pf - www.huratapairu.com

*Consult all the events
on www.TahitiTourisme.Travel*

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MARQUESAS ISLANDS

HATUTAA
EIAO

MOTU ONE

HATU ITI

● **NUKU HIVA**

● **UA HUKA**

● **UA POU**

● **HIVA OA**

▲ FATU HUKU

▲ MOTANE

● **TAHUATA**

● **FATU HIVA**



- Hotels and Guesthouses
- Only Guesthouses

TUAMOTU ISLANDS

TEPOTO (NORD)

○ NAPUKA

PUKA PUKA

TAKUME

FANGATAU

FAKAHINA

TAENGA

● **KEMO**

● **NIHIRU**

● **REKAREKA**

● **MARUTEA (NORD)**

○ TEKOKOTA

○ TAUERE

● **TATAKOTO**

● **RAIKI**

● **HIKUERU**

● **REITORU**

● **MAROKAU**

● **AMANU**

● **HAO**

● **AKIAKI**

● **VAHITAHU**

● **NINGONENGO**

● **PARAOA**

● **NUKUTAVAKE**

● **PINAKI**

● **MANUHANGI**

● **VAIRATEA**

● **AHUNUI**

● **PUKARUA**

● **REAO**

● **RARO**

● **ANUANURUNGA**

● **NUKUTEPIPI**

● **VANAVANA**

● **TUREIA**

● **TEMATANGI**

● **MORUROA**

● **FANGATAUFA**

● **TENARARO**

● **VAHANGA**

● **TENARUNGA**

● **MATUUREIVAVOA**

● **MARUTEA (SUD)**

● **MARIA (EST)**

● **MORANE**

● **MANGAREVA**

● **TARAVAI**

● **AKAMARU**

● **TEMOE**

MAROTIRI
DES DE BASS

GAMBIER ISLANDS

HOW DO YOU GET TO THE ISLANDS OF TAHITI?

The Faa'a International Airport, built on the lagoon, is located approximately 5 km (3 miles) west of Papeete near major hotels. The domestic airline terminal for Air Tahiti is right beside it with the Air Moorea terminal is 300 meters approximately away.

AIRLINE	FROM	ROUTING	FLIGHT TIME
AIR CALIN	Noumea	1/week	06h20
AIR FRANCE	Paris	3/week	22h00
AIR NEW ZEALAND	Los Angeles	3/week	08h00
	Auckland	2 to 3/week *	05h00
		5/week	22h00
AIR TAHITI NUI	Paris	(in the high season and) 3 to 5/week (in the low season)	
		6/week	
	Los Angeles	(in the high season and) 5 to 7/week (in the low season)	08h00
		3/week	
	Auckland	(in the high season and)	05h00
	Tokyo	2/week	11h00
	Seattle	2/week	10h00
FRENCH BEE	San Francisco	3/week	08h00
HAWAIIAN AIRLINES	Honolulu	1/week	05h00
UNITED AIRLINES	San Francisco	5/week	08h00
	Hanga Roa	1/week	04H50
LATAM	Santiago	1/week	11h00
AIR TAHITI	Rarotonga	1 to 2/week	02h30

*2 in code share with TN

More information on www.tahiti-aeroport.pf



HOW TO TRAVEL FROM ONE ISLAND TO ANOTHER?

BY PLANE...

REGULARLY SCHEDULED FLIGHTS:

Air Tahiti operates regularly scheduled flights out of Tahiti over a network of 46 islands and atolls and it operates a 10-minute shuttle service between Tahiti and Moorea.

www.airtahiti.com

REGULAR AIRLINES

AIR TAHITI

www.airtahiti.com

CHARTER FLIGHTS ON REQUEST: AIR ARCHIPELS, AIR TAHITI, TAHITI AIR CHARTER

www.air-archipels.com

www.airtahiti.com

www.tac.pf

HELICOPTER SERVICE

TAHITI NUI HELICOPTERS

www.tahitiniuihelicopters.com

SEAPLANE SERVICE

TAHITI AIR CHARTER

www.tac.pf

BY BOAT...

Catamarans and ferry boats cross between Tahiti and Moorea several times a day. Schooners and cargo boats serve all the inhabited islands from Papeete. Rotations vary according to the destinations: three times a week to the Society Islands, three to five times a week to the Tuamotu Islands, every fifteen days to the Marquesas and the Austral Islands and once monthly to the island of Mangareva.

SHUTTLES: AREMITI, APETAHI EXPRESS, TEREVAU, TEREVAU PITI, MAUPITI EXPRESS

www.aremiti.pf

www.apetahiexpress.pf

www.terevau.pf

www.terevaupiti.pf

maupitiexpress@mail.pf



HOW TO GET AROUND ON THE ISLANDS?

On *The Islands of Tahiti*, buses and taxis are available for those who don't have a car. A car, a four-wheel drive vehicle or even a scooter can be rented in one of the numerous agencies. In the Society Islands, "trucks" (picturesque buses with wooden passenger cabins) serve the different towns.



Finally, depending on the island you're on, if you want to discover our hidden paradises you can always go out for a ride on a bike or on a horse! Alternative and sustainable means of transportation are also available such as tuk tuk, electrically assisted bikes or electric scooters.

On some islands, taxi boats for lagoon transfers are also available to go to «*motu*» (islets) where you can find accommodation (like in the Tuamotu Islands) or to the airport (like on Bora Bora).

PREPARING YOUR TRIP

WHAT IS THE TIME DIFFERENCE?

The Islands of Tahiti are 10 hours behind GMT. This is a 12-hours summertime or 11 hours wintertime difference from Paris, 2 hours difference from the United States Pacific Coast and same time zone as Hawaii, 6 hours difference from Santiago de Chile, 19 hours from Tokyo and the Australian eastern seaboard and a 22 hours difference from New Zealand.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE/BUY RATES

1 Euro = 119.38 F CFP

1 £ = 141.03 F CFP

1 US Dollar = 112.73 F CFP

1 NZ Dollar = 72.81 F CFP

1 AU Dollar = 80.77 F CFP

1 CAN Dollar = 87.99 F CFP

100 Yen = 86.82 F CFP

(Currency rates given as an indication, updated on May 04, 2022).

ENTRY FORMALITIES

Information available on the website:
www.polynesie-francaise.pref.gouv.fr

PACKING YOUR SUITCASE

Bring summer clothes, beachwear, sportswear and boat wear, all preferably in cotton. Have something warm available for the evenings which are sometimes cooler (lagoon side, boat trips and in the mountains).

Footwear: sandals, sneakers, boat shoes.

Essential: swimming costumes, sunglasses, hat, coral friendly sunblock creams (intense reflection of the lagoons) and a powerful anti-mosquito lotion (useful in the islands in certain seasons).



*Foreign currency exchange offices:
banks, airports, hotels.*

*Notice: some atolls and remote islands have
no banking facilities. International credit
card is also accepted in most of the hotels.*

HEALTH

On *The Islands of Tahiti*, health facilities and services are available. Papeete, Taravao (Tahiti peninsula), Moorea and Uturoa (Raiatea) have complete hospital centers (hospitals and clinics). The other tourist islands have at least one infirmary or dispensary.

Find the entry conditions on www.TahitiTourisme.Travel

CUSTOMS

Customs declarations: Upon arrival in French Polynesia, you must declare all goods you are carrying with you and pay the relevant duties and taxes to the Customs Office. However, it is possible to be exempted from paying duties and taxes on goods listed below (purchases or gifts).

Information: www.douane.gouv.fr



MARQUESAS ISLANDS

It is believed that one never comes to the Marquesas Islands by chance. These isolated rocky fortresses rising from the big ocean look strikingly different from any other scenery. Far from the Polynesian blue lagoons, every island offers another kind of beauty, powerful, deep and primitive. This complete and original harmony between the Earth and Man which best describes the Marquesan people finds its source in the name they gave to this archipelago “The land of men / *Te Henua ‘Enana*”. Extremely attached to their cultural identity and their “extra-ordinary” heritage, this harmony beats continuously in the heart of the women and men of these islands, like the everlasting and deep sound of foot drums. The latter relay the story of the magical presence of *Mana*, where life originates from, and invites visitors through memorable feelings and impressions, as permanent and unforgettable as tattoos.



MARQUESAS ISLANDS



One doesn't discover the Marquesas Islands. They seduce you, fill you with emotion and will forever obsess you... The most prestigious artists such as Paul Gauguin, Pierre Loti, Victor Segalen, Herman Melville, Robert Louis Stevenson or the French singer Jacques Brel, all attempted, through their art and passion, to express this amazing and original beauty, this primitive and magnet-like force, these mysterious and elusive sensations, filling you and your mind and retaining your soul forever on the "Land of Men".

IN NUKU HIVA,

the deep bays of Anaho or Hatihe'u stretch their long peninsula like coasts to embrace you and invite you to visit their lush fertile valleys. The endless cliffs of Hakau'i Valley reach a height of 1,148 feet and feature myriads of water pearls falling from the Vaipō waterfalls. Collected in a black basalt basin, they feature a timeless, well-being spa.

This pristine island boasts impressive archaeological sites, such as the protected, restored and listed *tohua* of Koueva in Taioha'e, where mysterious petroglyphs (drawings carved in stone) tell their story to the pure hearted. Vai-tāvi'i archaeological site in Taipivai hosts the largest number of original tiki statues. The tiki or *ti'i* symbolizes life and death, profane and secular words, which will petrify the visitors looking into these monuments' huge and enigmatic eyes...

ONE FEELS HUMBLE

when arriving in **UA POU** looking at the rock peaks, standing like unconquered giant warriors of mythical times watching over this sanctuary island. They will, however, warmly welcome visitors, climbers or hikers walking along the narrow mountain ridge passage across the island. Hakahetau, "the bay where we stay (*tau*)" provides sailing yachts with a safe anchorage. Navigators will be warmly greeted in the local village. The islanders will naturally share, expecting nothing in return. This natural kindness is featured in the work of Ua Pou local craftsmen, carved in the natural "flowered" stone or in *miro* (rose wood).

THE BEAUTY OF WILD,

mysterious and pristine **UA HUKA** is explored in different ways. Horse ride along the vertiginous towering cliffs carved by the wind and sea sprays or along the beautiful sheltered Hatu'ana bay. Snorkel and discover a sea-cave and the unrevealed secret of the "step cave" at Tekehu Point. Follow the spiritual steps of the ancient religious sacred sites, such as *me'ae* Meiaute, feeling an atmosphere filled with *Mana* by strange carvings which almost appear "extra-terrestrial", as if they had arrived from another planet....



© Bertrand Duquenne

HIVA OA IS A HIGHLIGHT OF THE MARQUESAS.

The adjectives “gigantic” and “monumental” best describe the island. The cultural site of Tipona in Puama’u is home to Taka’i’i, the largest tiki of French Polynesia. In Ta’a’oa, under lush dense vegetation under banian trees, Tahitian chestnut trees and giant catappa trees, stretches the 30 acre huge ancient cultural center. Once very populated, the site offers many remnants of tiki, petroglyphs and other impressive carvings. The small flowery cemetery (Cimetière du Calvaire) hides behind Mount Temetiu’s spectacular mountain ridge and hosts art celebrities like Paul Gauguin and Jacques Brel who both left the civilized world and chose Hiva Oa as their last home to respectively “enjoy savagery” for Gauguin and “stop moaning about winter and death” for Brel...

Nested in a fascinating scenery where colors at dusk are so incredible that they leave visitors speechless, the “Bay of Virgins”, described as the most beautiful in the world by Robert Louis Stevenson, is an unforgettable and privileged landing for most navigators arriving from the Galápagos Islands. Pure **FATU HIVA** Island – and her authentic fragrances – is rightly named “the virgin island”. The still of the night, thanks to mineral and lunar elements, will blend with the sunrise when the locals start beating *tapa* – the most sought-after of French Polynesia, renowned for its fineness. Going up the impressive mountain ridge surrounding Hanavave village, the air fills up with the suave and sweet scent of a *kumu-hei* flower bouquet beautifying the amazing hair of the local women, that it’s said no one could ever resist...

AUSTRAL ISLANDS

From **Tubuai** to **Rapa**, through **Raivavae**, **Rurutu** and **Rimatara**, the Austral Islands features a small, secluded world in the colossal South Pacific Ocean. Rapa with her rugged mountains, fertile lands flirt with uplands and eroded hills and have made this group of islands the food basket of *The Islands of Tahiti*. The mild and temperate climate is particularly suited to agriculture: *taro* roots, potatoes but also delicious lychees and even peaches, anything grows! Just like in the Tuamotu where people live on remote atolls at the edge of the world, the main value is sharing as a community and the islanders have developed a certain “art of well being”. The *Tuha’a-pae* have also always kept a strong sense of community life.

IN RURUTU,

the flowers of the 'atae tree (*erythrina* variety) bloom in blazing red during the month of July and announce the arrival of many humpback whales coming to breed in warm waters, sheltered by intimate and pristine Rurutu. Travelers will make their dream come true. They may encounter and snorkel with whales, watching their dance and listening to their songs from Matona'a platform. The scenery is picturesque. The island's unusual irregular geology carved in cliffs along the coast offers beautiful caves featuring formations hiding mythical prints, legends and history, such as "Ina cave", Te-rua-ō-'Ina where an ogress whose magical hands, skilled fingers and long nails gave birth to basket weaving, a long time tradition in the Austral Islands. *Tūha'a-pae* women took over and made their skills famous worldwide. Nowadays, one often sees several generations of women gathering and working on the same piece, finely weaving a community mat, called *pē'ue*.



TUBUAI,

boasts scenic fertile lands and abundance. Following the road going through the island up to Mount Taita'a (elevation 422 meters), visitors will marvel at the lush and colorful island harmoniously blending with the bright turquoise, crystal clear huge lagoon filled with *motu*: green *taro* fields and meadows, white lily fields, red bunches of lychees hanging from their tree to the ground and ripe just in time for Christmas... An ideal island which convinced Christian Fletcher and his crew (*The Mutiny of the Bounty*) to try and settle there. The sites of "La baie sanglante" ("Bloody Bay") and Fort George where they remained entrenched during a murderous war against a part of the population before being left with no other choice than to leave Tubuai for Pitcairn Island where they would eventually stay. Formerly counting many inhabitants, the



island was the Australs' sacred place, the "divine head" (*tupua'i*). The island is home to numerous remnants and archaeological sites, both unique and amazing, such as the most important cultural tattoo center of French Polynesia, located in Hāri'i valley.

Take a long break and relax on a paradise beach at Raivavae's piscine *motu* ... The water is so clear, so crystal clear, that one feels like weightless between sky and sandy bottom. There, lost in a timeless environment, you are living the dream! Stroll or ride a bicycle on the picturesque paths and be seduced by the powerful, proud, noble and spiritual atmosphere, called *Mana* surrounding the island. It provides the island with a mysterious magnetic pull from the cultural remnants of upright stones erected like megaliths at *marae* Unurau, probably the island's largest *marae*. The *Mana* mesmerizes when, at the end of a hike to the top of Mount Hiro, Raivavae's highest peak, you discover a 360° scenery blending with the soul of a people of memory (*hiro*). They will host you like a member of their community and never forget you.

RIMATARA,

the proud island (*tara*), a warrior, wild (*rī*), and indomitable. Let the locals tell you the legend of Te vāhine-punarua, a beautiful mermaid protecting the pass entrance against intruders and big swells – if you know how to hear the song of Polynesian mermaids, then maybe will you be lucky enough to see them, swimming on the wave crest... This pristine land and its inhabitants will heartedly welcome travelers. Do not miss an encounter with the tiny and endemic *vini 'ura* (Kuhl's lorikeet), a superb protected parakeet known as the symbol of the island. Perched on a banana tree green leaf or on its red inflorescence which nectar is its favorite, the encounter with this little bird is moving. Its harmonious feathers create a brilliant contrast with its vibrant, strong and striking colors! - Would French impressionist painter Henri Matisse have anything to do with this?

THE SEA

Nature and discovery

Most of the islands have a lagoon and offer a wide range of nautical activities. *The Islands of Tahiti* are one of the most beautiful diving destinations in the world. Its intense and deep blue shelters the most beautiful species. You may encounter sting rays, hammerheads, lemon, oceanic whitetip or grey reef sharks, humpback whales, fish shoals, corals, breathtaking depths and mysterious wrecks.



SCUBA DIVING, AQUASCOPE, SUBMARINE, AND SEMISUBMERSIBLE ADVENTURES:

The Islands of Tahiti are one of the most beautiful destinations in the world for scuba diving. In the deep and intense blue water, you will encounter extraordinary species of marine life: manta rays, hammerhead sharks, lemon sharks, black-tip reef sharks, humpback whales and schools of fish of all kinds. You will be awed by the dizzying descent of the coral walls and mysterious shipwrecks. All year round, you can access the enchanting marine world, which boasts 30-meter (98 ft.) visibility



LAGOON EXCURSIONS:

Discover the sea beds, picnic on a *motu* (islet), witness stingray and shark feeding exhibitions, or swim with dolphins.



ROMANTIC CRUISE:

Tour the lagoon on a catamaran while viewing a romantic sunset and enjoying a bubbly glass of champagne.



SAILING:

Boat rental companies rent single hulled vessels or catamarans, based in Tahiti, Moorea and the Leeward Islands, enabling you to choose your preferred type of rental-with or without a skipper or hostess, for the weekend, for a few days, or even for week. It's the perfect occasion for you to explore firsthand the interiors of the lagoons in all the different groups of islands, so diverse and rich in beauty.



DEEP SEA FISHING. LAGOON FISHING.



WINDSURFING:

You can practice windsurfing on the east coast of Tahiti, especially near the coastline of Point Venus in Mahina.



WATER SKIING:

For novice or advanced-level water skiers, enjoy skiing the crystal-clear lagoons as you glide over the silent world below.



© Mysee McGillemess



**PARAGLIDING,
HANG GLIDING, PARASAILING:**
Paragliding lovers will be able to fly over the reef with maximum security, exceptional views are guaranteed!



**CANOE, KAYAK,
OUTRIGGER CANOE, JET-SKI RENTALS:**
Whether you are interested in a workout or just a quiet jaunt around the lagoon, this is another fantastic way discover the islands from the sea.



SURFING, KITE SURFING:
Tahiti, Raiatea and Bora Bora are home to some of the most famous surf spots in the world. If you are a pro or novice, you will find your own favorite surfing spot : www.surf.pf



**PEARL FARM VISIT
(TUAMOTU, HUAHINE, RAIATEA,
TAHAA, BORA BORA).**



© Grégoire Le Bacon



© Grégoire Le Bacon



THE MOUNTAINS

Nature and discovery

The high islands (Society, Marquesas, Australs) offer numerous hiking possibilities, where you can discover vertiginous panoramic views of the lagoons and bays, and where you can witness the immensity of the Pacific Ocean.



HIKING / DISCOVERY

TREKKING: Hike across the wild valleys of Huahine or through the *māpē* (Tahitian chestnut trees) in search of the mysterious *marae* (traditional temples). As you explore the imposing waterfalls of Afareaitu (on Moorea) or discover the *tiāre 'apetahi* on the slopes of Raiatea, you will stroll on winding pathways which open up to breathtaking panoramic views. Tahiti and her peninsula, Tahiti Iiti, offer innumerable excursion possibilities at all levels through mountains and valleys (i.e. ascending Mount Aorai, crossing Tahiti Nui (the big island), exploring the lavatubes, etc.).



HORSEBACK RIDING: Saddled up on a Marquesan horse, you will ride through the spectacular valley landscapes of Hiva Oa with her numerous archaeological sites. Other equestrian outings will take you along white-sand beaches with a sumptuous sunset in the background, or you can go up the rivers amid the luxuriant flora.



MOUNTAIN BIKING: You only need a regular bike to drive on the perimeter road (which is flat), but a mountain bike or an e-bike will be necessary to cross the interior of the islands. You can rent bikes at many hotels.



FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE/QUAD/SVV: Discover former vanilla plantations on a four-wheel drive safari through the tropical valleys of Raiatea and Taha'a. This excursion will enable you to explore the interiors of the islands of Tahiti, Moorea, Raiatea, Taha'a, Huahine, Bora Bora and the Marquesas. You can also rent cars, scooters, 4-wheelers and "fun cars" on the larger islands or take a circle-island tour by bus.



SPORTS ACTIVITIES

GOLF:

On Tahiti and Moorea, the fairways and greens of the 18-hole golf course are just a small part of the beauty of these sites.



NATURE / CULTURE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMNANTS: Discover the Polynesia of old at the *marae* and other sites.



MUSEUM VISITS (TAHITI, MOOREA, BORA BORA, MARQUESAS ISLANDS).

- The House of James Norman Hall
- Robert Wan Pearl Museum
- Musée de Tahiti et des îles - Te Fare Manaha
- Navy Museum
- He'e Tai Inn
- Jacques Brel Cultural Space
- Vaipā'e Archaeological Museum
- Hōkату Museum of Geology
- Hane Sea Museum
- Wood Museum "Botanical Garden"
- Petroglyph Museum
- Vaitāhu Museum



CANYONING (TAHITI AND MOOREA)

Marvel in the heart of nature, canyoning is ideal for the rivers of Tahiti, abseiling down waterfalls, jumping in water basins, or exploring underground caves (Lavatuses of Hiti'a) will leave unforgettable memories. The assistance of guides approved by the Ministry of Youth and Sports is highly advised.



AERIAL TOUR OF THE ISLAND BY HELICOPTER OR BY PLANE:

Seeing panoramic views of Tahiti, Moorea, Bora Bora and Hiva Oa from the air is a new excursion that you must do! The aerial views of basalt peaks and canyons, where waterfalls pour out from numerous ridges and plateaus, reveal another secret and enticing side of the interior of Polynesia.



BOTANICAL GARDEN TOURS (TAHITI, MOOREA, HUAHINE, RAIATEA, TAHA'A, MARQUESAS).

THE ISLANDS *of*
TAHITI

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