The Islands of Tahiti

Society Islands | Tuamotu Islands | Gambier Islands | Marquesas Islands | Austral Islands
Have you ever dreamed of a marvellous, fertile world of sun-drenched landscapes that appears 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 pareus (skirts) of the vahine (women) contrast with their ebony hair, bathed in the raw tropical sunlight.

Tahiti, Mo'orea, 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, Manihiki, Fakarava, Tikehau - atolls at the end of the world, these “pearl islands” enclose in their jewelry-box lagoons the blue depths where black pearls grow and develop.

From the north to the south, from the fertile plains of the Australs to the sharp cliffs of the Marquesas, these fragrant paradises combine all the different landscapes created by generous Mother Nature. Secret or rebellious, savage but never hostile, their beaches, shaded by coconut trees, tell of the centuries of erosion which made them gold or basalt, atoll or mountain.

Everything here whispers the legends of the mā’ohi people who discovered these crumpled lands, where the ‘uru (breadfruit), the fa’i (wild banana), and the taro (tubercle) thrive... these generous islands whisper to us, Mānava, Welcome...
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, small coral crowns offering a lush green vegetation in their center and white sandy beaches flirting with the ocean. The crystal blue water will unveil even more treasures. Every island of the Society archipelago unveils a legacy, a living culture in constant development, authentic encounters and an invaluable art of living in harmony within an unspoiled environment. Pure natural luxury, at all times…
THE 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 and hike or go on a 4WD ride across the lush Papeno'o valley hiding legendary and archeological remnants 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 and ask for a cuddle. Located between 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 MO’OREA...
HOW CAN ONE DESCRIBE REALISTICALLY BORA BORA?

The Pearl of the Pacific is the perfect postcard featuring her noble and impressive Mount ‘Otemanu, glorified by the sunset and the perfect still waters of the lagoon. Feel the privilege and luxury of being alone in the world, in paradise, in the sweet, private and romantic comfort of an overwater villa where time disappears...
AND HOW ABOUT EXPLORING HUAHINE,

“The Island of women”, with her inspiring languorous and voluptuous curves? A sense of respect floats over mystical Huahine, where visitors are invited to discover the cultural Polynesian wisdom on the archeological sites of Maeva or follow the legendary and epic steps of hero and demi-god Hiro-ā-Moeterāuri, the famous sailor on Hiva’s big ocean.

RAIATEA

“the island making lands” is the sacred island where lies Te-Pō, the most important and internationally renowned cultural center of the Polynesian Triangle with Taputapuātea marae. 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 ‘apetahi 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‘atui, 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 in the luxury of a private swim, alone, on Tere’i’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.
t is believed that one never comes to the Marquesas 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 tell about the story of the magical word "Mana", where life originates from, and invite visitors through memorable feelings and impressions, as permanent and unforgettable as tattoos.

THE MARQUESAS ARCHIPELAGO
THE MARQUESAS ARCHIPELAGO

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 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’a’e Meiaute, feeling an atmosphere filled with MANA by strange carvings with features that look “extra-terrestrial”, as it they had arrived from another planet....

IN NUKU HIVA,

the spectacular scenery seems to be in 3D! 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 350 meters and feature myriads of water pearls falling from the Vaipō waterfalls.

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”.

© Philippe Bacchet
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 flowered 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...
ACCOMMODATION

DELUXE HOTELS

The islands of French Polynesia 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, where talented chefs blend local flavors with French or Asian influences.

FAMILY HOTELS

More affordable than the large resorts, the family hotels 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 French Polynesia 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 Tahiti’s islands. There are also a number of luxury cruise boats which offer thematic vacations for small groups.

CRUISE SHIPS

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

### HOW TO GET TO TAHITI AND HER ISLANDS?

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*Via Los Angeles, “code share” TN between Papeete and Los Angeles. **In “code share” with TN.
HOW TO TRAVEL FROM ONE ISLAND TO ANOTHER?

BY AIR

REGULARLY SCHEDULED FLIGHTS:
Air Tahiti operates regularly scheduled flights out of Tahiti over a network of 41 islands and atolls and it operates a 10-minute shuttle service between Tahiti and Moorea. www.airtahiti.com

THE REGULAR AIRLINES
AIR TAHITI
www.airtahiti.com

CHARTER FLIGHTS ON REQUEST:
AIR ARCHIPELS, AIR TAHITI, SARL POL’AIR.
www.air-archipels.com
www.airtahiti.com
www.tahiti-aircharter.net
www.compagniepolair.com

BY HELICOPTER
TAHITI HELICOPTERS
www.tahiti-helicopters.com

SEAPLANE SERVICE
TAHITI AIR CHARTER
www.tahiti-aircharter.net

HOW TO GET AROUND ON THE ISLANDS?

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, every fifteen days to the Marquesas and the Austral Archipelago and once monthly to the island of Mangareva.

On the island 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 Archipelago, “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! 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) 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, 6 hours difference from Santiago de Chile, 19 hours from Tokyo and the Australian eastern seaboard and a 22 hours difference from New Zealand.

SOME PRACTICAL DETAILS

CURRENCY EXCHANGE/BUY RATES

EUR 1 = F.CFP 119.33
GBP 1 = F.CFP 144.72
USD 1 = F.CFP 85.42
NZD 1 = F.CFP 72.63
AUD 1 = F.CFP 80.17
CAND 1 = F.CFP 78.71
Yen 100 = F.CFP 83.64

Foreign exchange rates as at 07/29/2014.

HEALTH

No vaccines are required except for passengers from high-risk countries (this information can be obtained from your airline). On the island of Tahiti, sanitary facilities and health services are available. The cities of Papeete, Taravao (peninsula of Tahiti) and Uturoa (Raiatea) have fully equipped hospitals. Other tourist islands at least possess a hospital or a clinic.

WHAT ARE THE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS?

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

CUSTOMS

Customs declaration: 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

WHAT TO PACK?

Bring summer clothes, beachwear, sports wear 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, 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.

Nitocé: some atolls and remote islands have no banking facilities. International credit card are also accepted in most of the hotels.
AGENDA

FEVERARY

- FIFo – PACIFIC International DocumentARy FiLM FestIVAL TAHITI
  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 2014 PoLyNESIA TATAU TAHITI
  The association of tahitian tattooists arrange an annual event at the Tahiti Radisson hotel. Featuring local tattoo artists from the Islands of Tahiti, the Pacific region and other continents.
  Contact: pirato@mail.pf

- TAHITI PEARL REGATTA RAIATEA, TAHAA, 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: tpr@mail.pf / www.tahitipearlregatta.org.pf
**JULY**

- **HEIVA I TAHITI TAHITI**
  The best singing and dance groups compete on the mythical stage of Toata 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 plaza welcomes traditional handcraft artists showcasing their mastery of know-how through their most gracious and creative works.
  Contact: communication@maisondelaculture.pf - www.maisondelaculture.pf

**AUGUST**

- **BILLABONG PRO SURFING TAHITI**
  An international competition amongst the world’s best surfers on Teahupoo’s mythical waves of Tahiti’s peninsula.
  Contact: fedesurf@live.fr / www.surf.pf

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**NOVEMBER**

- **HAWAIKI NUI VA'A HUAHINE, RAIATEA, TAHAA, BORA BORA**
  Vaa or outrigger canoe is the ultimate traditional sport. Over 100 outriggers will race from Huahine to Raiatea, Tahaa 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@mail.pf / www.hawaikihuivaa.pf

- **BORA BORA IRON MAN LIQUID FESTIVAL TAHITI**
  Welcome to this outstanding water boardsports festival where numerous champions from all over the world participate in sports challenges in Bora Bora, one of the most beautiful lagoons in the world. Traditional music and dances are part in this high-level yearly sports event.
  Contact: kainaluxt@gmail.com / www.boraboraliquidfestival.com

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Visit tahiti-tourisme.pf to see all the events.
It is the furthest archipelago of French Polynesia but really 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, which original construction was finished 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 Mauteoa” (Domain of King Mauteoa) 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 Tagaora”, renamed “the Mangarevan Versailles”.

The insolent beauty of Mangereva’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.
From Tubuai to Rapa, through Raivavae, Rurutu and Rimatara, the Austral archipelago features a small, secluded world in the colossal South Pacific Ocean. Aside Rapa and 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 ‘ātae 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-ā’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. Tūh’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.

Take a long break and relax on a paradise beach at Raivavae’s pool 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 dolmens 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.

TUBUAI

boasts scenic fertile lands and abundance. Following the road going through the island up to Mount Taia’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.

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 privileged 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 Tuamotu atolls hold a promise: they are the perfect incarnation of the edge of the world and paradise on Earth. These coral diamonds lying between sky and ocean mesmerize visitors with the radiant beauty of their lagoons with unique vivid and iridescent blue and green colors. The wide variety of marine life make these coral rings exceptional places to dive. Usually in a village, the islanders 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 Archipelago 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...
Under the crystal clear waters where the immaculate white of the sand merges with a fabulous underwater ecosystem, a snorkeling trip allows one to explore traditional coral built fish traps such as those of Temarie in 'Aanā or Fakarava’s lagoon, protected and part of a UNESCO biosphere thanks to the wide variety of its marine life and where one feels privileged to find unspoiled and untouched dive sites.

The TuaMoTU atolls are also the main source of food 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. Didn’t Captain Jacques-Yves Cousteau once refer to Tikehau’s lagoon as the home of the largest number of fish in French Polynesia?

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, Hīrīa pass close to Tiputa village shelters impressive hammerhead sharks and a resident pod of bottlenose dolphins (Tursiops truncatus). The latter play with 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.

Among these small glittering jewels, one is brighter and as precious as a gem, born from the alchemy of the marine element and its underwater inhabitants and the technical ability of Man. This invaluable present and pledge of love of a man for his loved one in the ancient times is “the black pearl of Tahiti”, the symbol of the Tuamotu.

The Atoll of Manihi

is a perfect place for the culture of this gem. Discover the secret of the mother of pearl, farmed and hand-grafted, giving birth to the Tahitian black pearl, the vahine’s essential accessory. This luxurious and exotic is displayed in the world’s most prestigious jewelers’ shop windows.

The Tuamotu atolls

are also the main source of food 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. Didn’t Captain Jacques-Yves Cousteau once refer to Tikehau’s lagoon as the home of the largest number of fish in French Polynesia?
Most of the Islands have a lagoon and offer a wide range of nautical activities. The Islands of Tahiti is 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:**

Tahiti and Her Islands is 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.

**ROMANTIC CRUISES:**

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 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 a 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.

**WATERSKIING:**

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

PEARL FARM VISIT (TUAMOTU, HUAHINE, RAIALEA, TAHAA, BORA BORA).

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
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 mape (Tahitian chestnut trees) in search of the mysterious “marae” (traditional temples). As you explore the imposing waterfalls of Afareaitu (on Moorea) or discover the “tīare Apetahi” on the slopes of Raiatea, you will stroll on winding pathways which open up to breathtaking panoramic views. Tahiti and her peninsula, Tahiti Iti, 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 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 Tahaa. This excursion will enable you to explore the interiors of the islands of Tahiti, Moorea, Raiatea, Tahaa, 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.

SPOR T S 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.

MUSEUMS (TAHITI, BORA BORA, MARQUESAS ISLANDS):
- Robert Wan Pearl Museum
- Tahiti and Islands - Te Fare Manaha Museum
- The House of James Norman Hall
- He’e Tai Inn
- «Ha’e ‘Enana» Patrimonial Hall
- Jacques Brel Cultural Center
- Paul Gauguin Cultural Center
- Marine Museum
- Museum of the Wood “Jardin Botanique”
- Sea Museum of Hane
- Geology Museum of Hokatu
- Archaeological Museum of Vaipā’e’e
- Vaitahu Museum
- Petroglyph Museum

BOTANICAL GARDENS (TAHITI, MOOREA, HUAHINE, RAIATEA, TAHA’A, MARQUESAS).

CANYONING:
Marvel in the heart of nature, canyoning is ideal for the rivers of Tahiti, abseils down waterfalls, jump in water bassins, or underground explorations (Lavatubes of Hitia’a) will leave unforgettable memories. Guides approved by the ministry of Youth and Sports.

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.