

DAY 1

Depart from Papeete

Depart from Papeete in the morning, receive a warm welcome onboard from our crew and sail to Fakarava atoll in the Tuamotu archipelago.

Meal Plan Lunch and Dinner

Duration 11 Nights

Accommodation Aranui Cruise

DAY 2

Fakarava (January-June) or Kauehi (August-Dec.)

Fakarava, 488 km northeast of Tahiti, is a huge atoll that is part of a UNESCO “biosphere reserve” because of its rich eco-system, with an abundance of rare flora and fauna. Makatea, 210 km northeast of Tahiti, is an elevated atoll, like a fortress standing on the ocean with its 70 m high cliffs. This raised atoll is home to only 94 inhabitants who have decided not to leave their beloved island and its special history. At the end of the 19th century, large quantities of phosphates were discovered here.

Kauehi, 40 km north-east of Fakarava, was uninhabited not so long ago. It was gradually populated for the exploitation of copra and for several years, pearl farming has also been developed. Recently opened to tourism, Kauehi will seduce you by its authenticity as well as by the surrealist hues of its lagoon, which you can enjoy as if you were alone in the world!

Meal Plan Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

DAY 3

At Sea

There are many ways to while away a day at sea on Aranui 5 from immersing in the Polynesian culture during workshops on weaving, dancing, cooking, wrapping a pareo, playing the ukulele, language, and even 'tatau' or relax on deck, in one of the bars, attend a lecture, browse the boutique, work out in the gym, be pampered in Aranui's Polynesian spa, take a dip in the pool or just gaze out at the sea. When we arrive in the waters of the Marquesas, you will have to set your watches forward by half an hour.

Meal Plan Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

DAY 4

Nuku Hiva (Taiohae/Hatieu/Taipivai)

This island is the administrative centre of the Marquesas. The village of Taiohae stretches along the beach, which is like a magnificent amphitheatre created by the successive eruptions of three concentric volcanoes and dominated by towering cliffs streaked with waterfalls. In the small village, all of the government services and residences, the hospital, bank and schools, are close by. A lovely handicraft centre is located on the beach road.

Your adventure in Nuku Hiva will include a tour of the Cathedral Notre Dame, famed for its stonework and wood sculptures. In Hatiheu, you will visit the archaeological site known as Tohua Kamuihei, where public festivities once took place. Here you will see the paepae, immense stone platforms on which houses were built, and huge boulders carved with enigmatic petroglyphs. Under a giant banyan tree, enjoy a performance of traditional songs and dances, including the “Pig Dance”, which originated in Nuku Hiva. For lunch, try a traditional “Umu”, a Marquesan specialty where food is cooked in an underground oven.

Meal Plan Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

DAY 5

Ua Pou (Hakahau)

Legend refers to Ua Pou as the “pillars of the archipelago” and it is often called “The Cathedral Island”. These names become clear as the ship docks at Hakahau Bay surrounded by 12 basalt summits soaring as high as 1100 metres. Every island has its own special ambience and Ua Pou’s is one of mystery and magic. You are sure to see familiar looking faces as many of our crew members are from here. Energetic early risers can hike up the hill to the Cross for breathtaking views of the valleys and village below. The artisans’ centre is a short stroll into town and the offerings include works featuring the unique flower stone and a variety of carvings and children’s clothes. Before enjoying a Marquesan lunch, take in an excellent dance show, including the Bird Dance, a traditional Ua Pou performance.

Meal Plan Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

DAY 6

Ua Huka (Vaipae'e/Hane/Hokatu)

This island, the least inhabited in the Marquesas, is largely arid and home to many wild horses, goats and pigs. It is also a refuge for two endemic birds: the pati'oti'o and the pihiti, which are only found here. In the early morning, the Aranui will execute a point-to-point 180-degree turn in the narrow mouth of Vaipae'e's Invisible Bay. With only metres to spare on either side, it is a skillful operation undertaken by the captain and the crew and is not to be missed. From the dock, travel by 4WD to the village of Hane. Along the way, you will stop to explore the Botanical Garden, the cultural centre Te Tumu, featuring a small museum with exquisite replicas of Marquesan artifacts, and a petroglyph museum and local woodcarvers' studios in the fishing village of Hokatu. Look for the unusual carved black and white coconuts. In Hane, where a Marquesan lunch will be served, visit the Marine Museum beforehand and in the afternoon, hike to view red tuff tikis overlooking the bay.

Meal Plan Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

DAY 7

Tahuata (Vaitahu) - Hiva Oa (Atuona)

You will visit the impressive church of Tahuata which was built by the Vatican and decorated with beautiful carvings and a stained glass window featuring the Marquesan cross. Though the smallest of the inhabited Marquesan islands, it is historically one of the richest. Tahuata has experienced it all — it was the first island in the archipelago to be discovered by Spanish explorers, who opened fire on a crowd of curious islanders in 1595, saw

the arrival of missionaries in 1797 and then became the first French settlement in the Marquesas in 1842. The locals carve exquisite tikis, sea creatures, bracelets, necklaces and more from horse and cow bone, fossilised bone, tusks and pink helmet shell. Atuona, main village of Hiva Oa and the second largest in the Marquesas, was once the capital of this archipelago. Sweeping views of the harbour can be seen after a walk up the hill to the cemetery where Paul Gauguin and Jacques Brel are buried. Explore the Gauguin Museum, a replica of his "House of Pleasure", and the Brel Museum, which showcases his plane JoJo, which was often used for medical emergencies.

Meal Plan Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

DAY 8

Fatu Hiva (Omoa - Hanavave)

Fatu Hiva is the most lush and remote island in the archipelago, and is also a centre of Marquesan crafts. In the village of Omoa, women will demonstrate the making of tapa by hammering mulberry, banyan or breadfruit bark on a log. It is then dried and painted with traditional designs. Another demonstration will show the making of the kumuhei, a bouquet used by the local women to perfume their hair. The adjacent craft centre offers tapa, carvings, hand-dyed pareo and some of the finest monoi coconut oil found in these islands. Following the visit of the village, active passengers may choose to hike from Omoa to Hanavave, a 16 km hike offering spectacular views of towering cliffs. A picnic lunch will be served at the summit. Non-hikers will sail on the Aranui to Hanavave's Bay of Virgins, considered one of the most beautiful bays in the world. Go ashore for a visit of the village and to welcome the hikers.

Meal Plan Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

DAY 9

At Sea

Enjoy a day at sea to relax by the pool and participate in one of the lectures or activities offered by our guides.

Meal Plan Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

DAY 10

Rangiroa (Jan - Jun) or Makatea (Aug - Dec)

Rangiroa or "huge sky" is the largest atoll in French Polynesia and the second largest in the world. The seemingly endless blue lagoon attracts divers to snorkel, scuba or shoot the pass surrounded by fish of every size, colour and shape. Rangiroa is famous for its majestic manta rays. It is also home to stunning pearls in all shades and local artisans known for their fine shell jewelry. While in Rangiroa, you will have the opportunity to enjoy the magnificent lagoon on a glass bottom boat tour or swimming, snorkeling or diving. You can also visit one of the finest pearl farms in the Tuamotus to learn about these rare gems and see how they are grown. Makatea, 210 km northeast of Tahiti, is an elevated atoll, like a fortress standing on the ocean with its 70 m high cliffs. This raised atoll is home to only 94 inhabitants who have decided not to leave their beloved island and its special history. At the end of the 19th century, large quantities of phosphates were discovered here. Makatea was to have a unique industrial destiny in Polynesia. The island, until then forgotten by the modern world, was equipped with schools, a

cinema, religious centres, various industrial installations, including a 100-metre metal jetty and even a railway, which are still today the silent witnesses of its singular history.

Meal Plan Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

DAY 11

Bora Bora

As you arrive in Bora Bora's world-famous lagoon of opalescent blues and greens, you'll be greeted by the majestic "Mount Otemanu" the island's highest peak. In this perfect island paradise, you'll have plenty of time to discover how and why the Pearl of the Pacific earned such a well-deserved reputation. You can snorkel or dive and marvel at the turquoise lagoons, among the most beautiful in the world.

Meal Plan Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

DAY 12

Return to Tahiti (Papeete)

This is the end of our journey. It's time to say Nana! (Goodbye) to your travel companions, to the Polynesian staff and Aranui guides.

Meal Plan Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner