

# Itinerary

**3 WEEKS** FRENCH POLYNESIA  
Prepared by 37South SAMPLE

# INTRO

## THIS ITINERARY

This itinerary covers two island groups of French Polynesia - The Tuamotus Islands and the Society Islands. Starting in the most remote - The Tuamotus, guests will experience low lying atolls, unlimited watersports and isolated white sand beaches, uninhabited islands and a quieter side of life. The itinerary then moves to the Society Islands, this is the main group of islands in French Polynesia and the one most visitors are familiar with including the famous Bora Bora lagoon and the main island of Tahiti.

The itinerary is designed to provide a broad spectrum of what is on offer and may be changed and tailored to however guests would prefer.

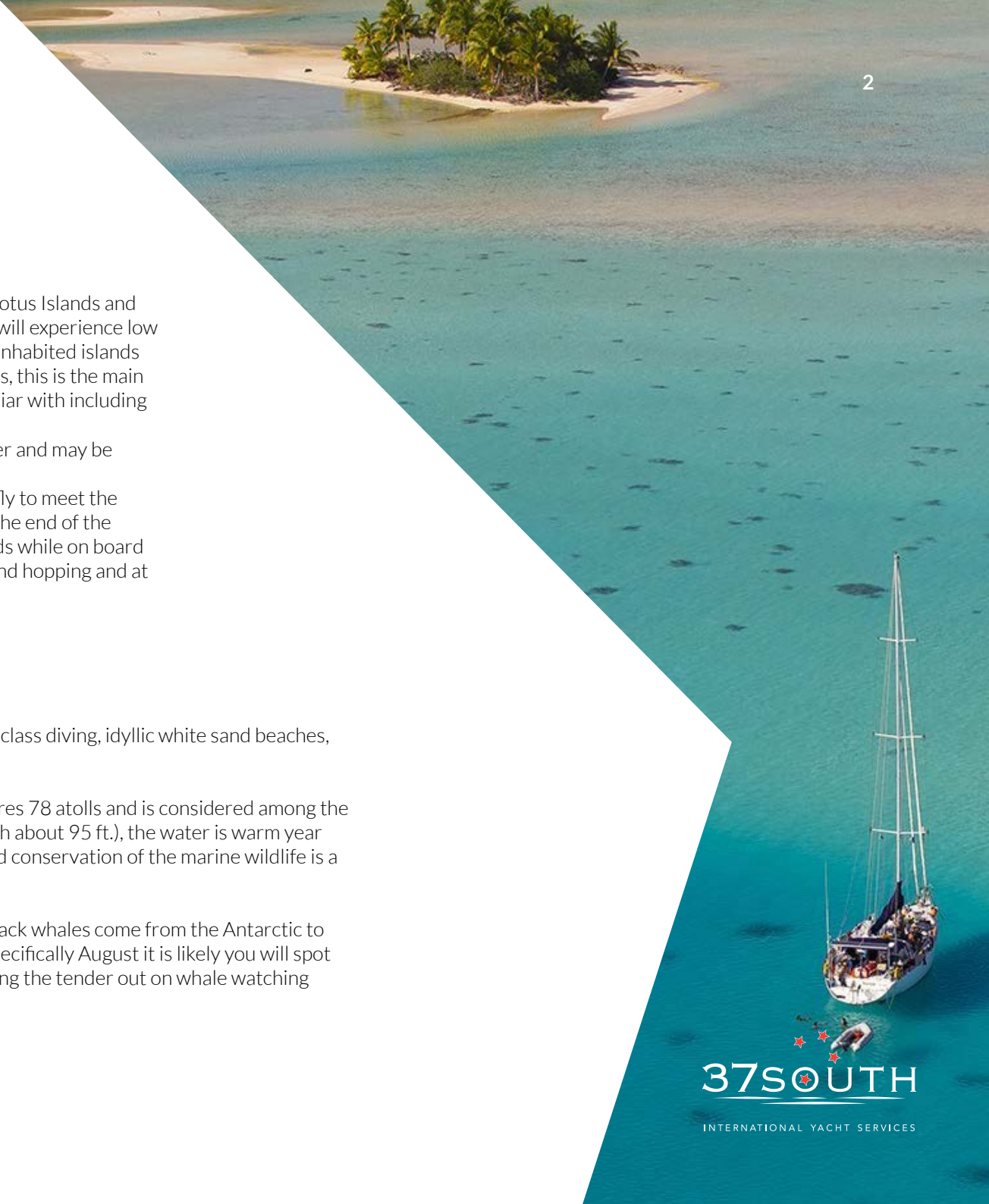
In order to get the most out of the itinerary it is suggested that guests fly to meet the vessel in the Tuamotus and also fly back to Papeete from Bora Bora at the end of the itinerary. This is to ensure guests are only travelling with the trade winds while on board for optimum comfort. It also means maximum charter time is spent island hopping and at sheltered anchorages.

## THE TUAMOTU ARCHIPELAGO

The Tuamotus, a group of low lying atolls are renowned for their world class diving, idyllic white sand beaches, spectacular snorkeling and remote location.

Located NE of the main island of Tahiti, the Tuamotu Archipelago features 78 atolls and is considered among the best dive sites worldwide. Most dive spots are fairly shallow (max. depth about 95 ft.), the water is warm year round and the visibility is excellent. There is phenomenal snorkeling and conservation of the marine wildlife is a local governmental priority.

The country became a sanctuary for marine mammals in 2002. Humpback whales come from the Antarctic to mate and breed every year from July to December. During this time, specifically August it is likely you will spot humpback whales when travelling between atolls at this time or by taking the tender out on whale watching excursions.



# DAY 1<sup>★</sup>

## MAKEMO

Fly from Papeete to Makemo to join the yacht anchored directly outside the airport. After settling in, and a safety tour, get underway for a leisurely 2-hour lagoon cruise to a beautiful beach. Makemo is the third longest island (21km).

### Activities:

- Snorkeling or world class diving with the tropical reef fish and a diverse range of fauna.
- Picnic on one of the motus (small sandy islands)
- Making the most of the water toys in the sheltered lagoon.

## DISTANCES

**Route** Papeete - Makemo  
**Distance** 250 nautical miles (by plane)  
**Time** 2.5 hours



# DAY 2<sup>★</sup>

## PUNURUKU BEACH, MAKEMO – TAHANEA VIA TEPOTO

Punuruku is the most beautiful beach on the atoll, perfect for swimming and exploring. Spend the morning relaxing, basking in the sun and soaking up the surroundings before setting on a scenic 45 nautical mile journey to Tahanea Atoll. This trip should take approximately four and a half hours depending on how many stops you choose to make along the way.

### ***You will be sailing past beautiful secluded small atolls in the Ravski Group including little Tepoto***

You may like to stop off and take the tender in to the lagoon. Tepoto is a small coral atoll about two miles across. There is only one very small pass to get into the lagoon which can cause problems when trying to get in but once inside the lagoon the natural beauty is overwhelming.

Arrive at Tahanea mid afternoon or late afternoon depending on how much time is spent exploring the small atolls dotted along the way. Enjoy the crystal clear waters and beautiful scenery before settling in for the evening at your sheltered anchorage.

## TEPOTO SUD OPTION

Tepoto Sud is one of the smallest atolls of the Tuamotu Archipelago, measuring just 3 km by 2.4 km. It is a member of the small Raevski cluster of atolls (Hiti, Tepoto Sud and Tuanake). Its lagoon of 2.5 km<sup>2</sup> is surrounded by a series of motu with a combined land area of 2.5 km<sup>2</sup>.

# DAY 3<sup>★</sup>

## TAHANEA

Beach picnic day on your own Motu (small island)! Commandeer one of the many beautiful secluded and uninhabited Motu inside the sheltered waters of Tahanea's lagoon. Spend the day enjoying the endless water sports and basking on your own private Motu while the crew serves up a delicious picnic lunch and delivers cold beverages.



# DAY 4

## TAHANEA

Tahanea is located in the Centre West Group, between the atolls of Faaite and Motutunga (12 km northwest and 17 km southeast, respectively), Tahanea is a large uninhabited atoll, measuring 48 km in length and 15 km in width. The south side of the atoll consists of a broad reef flat with a scattering of small motu. On the north side the reef is narrower and the reef islets longer and broader. In all, there are around 50 motu located around the 113 km long reef rim. The north side of the reef is broken by three deep passes that allow access to the large (545 km<sup>2</sup>) and deep lagoon. Unusually for the Tuamotu atolls, Tahanea contains a number of small vegetated islets within the central lagoon.

## ACTIVITIES

- Beach Picnic
- Watersports
- Explore the large lagoon by tender, paddle board, kayak or other.
- Go ashore and explore any one of the 50+ motu (small islands) dotted around the lagoon.
- Snorkel
- Dive the Pass

# DAY 4<sup>★</sup>

## TAHANEA – FAAITE - FAKARAVA

After breakfast, make the quick trip from Tahanea to Faaite en route to Fakarava and take time on the kayak or paddle board, exploring the crystal clear waters of the lagoon. Diving, surfing or wind surfing are all possibilities.

- Tahanea - Faaite - Fakarava
- Distance: 30nm
- Time: 3 hours travelling time

## DISTANCES

**Route** Tahanea - Faaite - Fakarava

**Distance** 30 nautical miles

**Time** 3 hours (approx)



# DAY 4

## FAAITE

Faaite is a medium sized atoll of the Centre West group located in the northwest of the archipelago, situated between the two larger atolls of Fakarava and Tahanea.

***Its deep central lagoon is studded with a profusion of coral heads and is almost completely surrounded by a continuous reef rim that is broken only at one location on the western side.***

The southern side of the atoll is formed by a comparatively broad and mostly submerged reef and its associated reef flats. The more sheltered northern side has been colonised by an extensive series of elongated and vegetated motu with a combined land area of around 9 km<sup>2</sup>.

## ACTIVITIES

- Diving
- Surfing
- Wind Surfing
- Snorkelling
- Beach Day
- Water sports
- Exploring the Lagoon

# DAY 5 - 6<sup>★</sup>

## FAKARAVA (UNESCO CLASSIFIED BIOSPHERE RESERVE)

Enjoy breakfast at the Southern Pass of Fakarava before either gearing up for a snorkeling expedition or heading ashore for a fascinating land excursion.

The rich ecosystem of Fakarava is home to rare birds, plants and crustaceans. Life along the shores is equally unique with quaint villages, old coral churches, and welcoming people. Even though Fakarava is the newest destination to welcome resort visitors among Tahiti, it was one of the first population centers and once served as the ancient capital of the Tuamotu region. So pure is the environment here that Fakarava has been designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve for the preservation of rare species. This designates this atoll, and six surrounding atolls, as a recognized area where local communities are actively involved in governance and management, research, education, training and monitoring - promoting both socioeconomic development and biodiversity conservation.

Option: Move to the North Pass for a thrilling drift dive. During this dive you will see many schools of fish, sharks, Napoleon wrasses and beautiful coral. You will enjoy diving in the strong current from the outer reef into the lagoon and stop in Ali Baba's hole at the bottom of the pass. There, you are sheltered from the drift and can watch pelagic fish go by above.

## ACTIVITIES

- Bird Watching
- Land Excursions
- Diving
- Snorkelling
- Surfing
- Beaching
- Lagoon Excursion
- Village Visit

# DAY 7 - 8

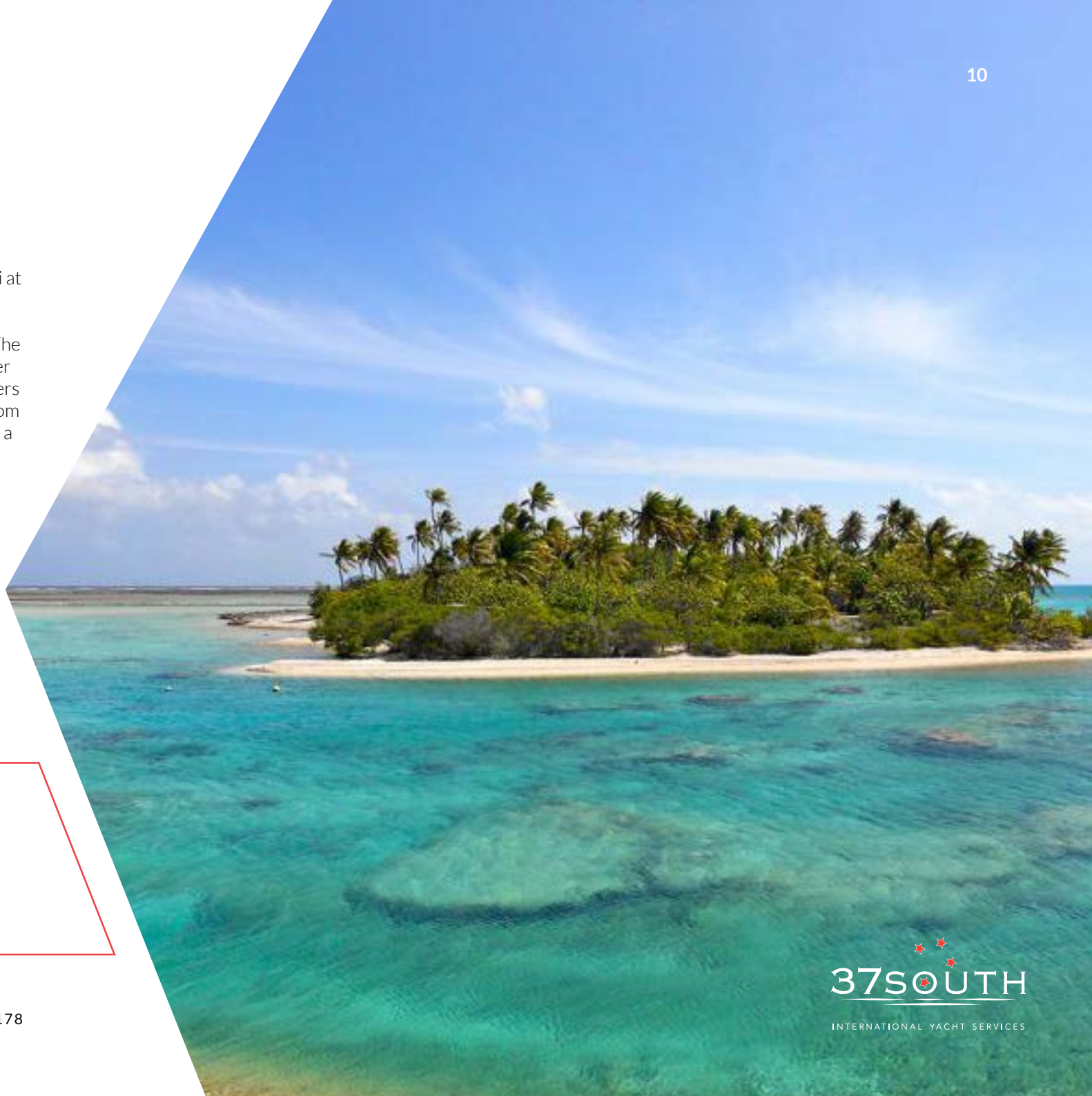
## FAKARAVA - APATAKI

Cruise to Apataki (60 miles) leaving at approximately 0600 hours to arrive in Apataki at around mid day for lunch.

Apataki is one of the Tuamotu's larger atolls. The atoll is roughly square-shaped with a perimeter of 106 km in length. The entire formation covers an area of over 745 km<sup>2</sup>, measuring 31 km from north to south and 25 km across. Its islets have a combined land area in the region of 20 km<sup>2</sup>.

## DISTANCES

**Route** Fakarava - Apataki  
**Distance** 60 nautical miles  
**Time** 6 hours cruising



# DAY 7 - 8 <sup>★</sup>

## APATAKI

Possible amazing Tuamotu experience: Meet the 11 inhabitants of the atoll near the North pass, trying to catch crayfish and mantis shrimps. There is a beautiful islet in the lagoon ideal for a typical Polynesian picnic. You can also visit a small traditional village at the South pass.

Option: Go for a drift dive at the North pass. Apataki hosts the largest grey reef shark population of the Tuamotu, offering an exciting dive! If the swell comes from the North, it is also a very good spot for surfing.

## ACTIVITIES

- Village Visits
- Beach Picnic
- Diving
- Surfing
- Lagoon and Land Excursions
- Wind Surfing



# FRENCH POLYNESIA



# DAY 9

13

## APATAKI - RANGIROA

Early morning Departure for Rangiroa, enjoy breakfast underway while keeping an eye out for humpback whales!

Arrive lunch time at Rangiroa Atoll for a briefing of the area and a run down of activities available over the next two - three days.

## DISTANCES

**Route** Apataki - Rangiroa

**Distance** 60 nautical miles

**Time** 6 hours (approx)

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# DAYS 10 - 12<sup>★</sup>

## RANGIROA

Depending on what guests want to do, the vessel could remain at one of the previous stops for a day or so longer, or take more time on Rangiroa exploring the many sites. It's also possible to do day trips to the surrounding atolls once based at Rangiroa.

Rangiroa Atoll is the closest atoll to Tahiti and the most developed island in the Tuamotus for tourism. It is also the second largest atoll in the world with a lagoon in its centre measuring 75km across and 25km wide.

Leave Rangiroa on the evening of the 12th (or 13th) for overnight excursion to Papeete. You also have the option to disembark in Rangiroa and fly to Papeete to re-join the vessel if you would prefer to not be on board for the passage.

## THINGS TO DO IN RANGIROA

- Avatoru - Rangiroa's capital is a small village on Avatoru Pass with two churches (Catholic and Mormon) fashioned from coral, a town hall, post office, banks, and a couple of general stores. It has an ideal location with access to the lagoon, the ocean's surf beach, and the pass's good diving spot.
- For the curious and wine lovers, it is possible to discover a unique vineyard located in the middle of a coconut plantation, on the lagoon side, and then of course taste its production.
- To experience a true slice of island life, turn up at 10 am on Sunday for one of the church services.
- Blue Lagoon - This "lagoon with a lagoon" is a popular excursion. The water is sensationally blue and fringed by white sandy beaches and coconut trees.
- Gauguin's Pearl Farm - The farm is an easy walk from the airport on the edge of the lagoon. A guide, who explains the long and laborious process of cultivating Tahitian black pearls, shows around small groups. Tours take 30 minutes and are fascinating; you'll learn about the *Pinctada margaritifera* or black-lipped oyster, and watch technicians insert a nucleus (a small shell bead) into the oyster and attach it with a graft of oyster muscle tissue to begin the pearling process. There's a jewelry boutique but it's not a hard-sell experience: a single top-grade pearl can cost 41,000 CFP (about US\$530).
- Ile aux Recifs - The "isle of reefs" is considered the best lagoon excursion of all. Located about an hour due south of Avatoru, it's an area dotted with raised feo (coral outcrops), some 16 to 19 feet (5 to 6 meters) above the lagoon. These amazing formations are on the ocean side so you'll have to put on your reef shoes to explore them. They stretch about 300 feet (9 meters) and between them are pools perfect for swimming and excellent snorkeling. Picnics are usually held on one of the larger motus.
- Les Sables Roses - This pink sand beach is in the southeast corner of Rangiroa, reached by a two-hour boat trip. The sands contain eroded coral and foraminifera deposits (the pulverized red shells of tiny sea creatures) which sparkle in the sunlight.
- Otepipi - This deserted village, complete with church, is on the opposite side of the lagoon to Avatoru, midway between Ile aux Recifs and Les Sables Roses.

# DAYS 10-12<sup>★</sup>

## DIVE RANGIROA

Rangiroa is a unique place for diving, probably among the most spectacular in the Tuamotu. There is a special dive along the reef opposite the blue lagoon, ocean side. Silver tip sharks and schools of jackfish are around the Avatoru pass. Tiputa pass is a must for diving: any type of marine encounter is possible and not rare (manta rays, bottlenose dolphins – possible to pet them during a dive; hammerhead sharks, silky sharks, sail fish, eagle rays...).

## DISTANCES

**Route** Rangiroa - Papeete  
**Distance** 200 nautical miles  
**Time** Overnight 12 hours approx



# DAY 13

## PAPEETE

Wake up entering the lively island style metropolis of Papeete. Explore the busy town and buy local trinkets from the markets.

Things to do in Papeete:

- All day trip around the island by road, stop for lunch half way, swim and enjoy the many beach's and water falls to bath in, close to the coast.
- Papeete public market, open from 7.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m.
- Paul Gauguin Museum. This famous French artist spent the last 12 years of his life in Tahiti, the museum has in its possession some of this unconventional painter's original works including sculptures, engravings and gouaches.
- Shark feeding daily at noon.
- Four wheel drive safari to the interior rain forests, hiking and helicopter tours.

## DISTANCES

**Route** Papeete to Moorea  
**Distance** 15 nautical miles  
**Time** 1 hour (approx)



# DAY 13<sup>★</sup>

## PAPEETE - MOOREA

Depart for sunset cruise in the early evening for 1 hour cruise to the magical island of Moorea. Considered one of the best sunset views in the world with the sun setting behind the striking, mountainous island.

Enjoy a sunset cocktail as you celebrate the next part of your journey – the Society Islands.

Note: If it is preferred to stay out of populated areas, Papeete can be skipped and the vessel can relocate direct from Rangiroa to Moorea.

## DISTANCES

**Route** Papeete to Moorea  
**Distance** 15 nautical miles  
**Time** 1 hour (approx)

# INTRO<sup>★</sup>

## THE SOCIETY ISLANDS

The Society Islands are a welcome contrast to the low lying atolls of the Tuamotus. Many of these islands tower high in the sky offering striking scenery. This is the most well-known and populated group of Islands in French Polynesia which include the main island of Tahiti and the world famous Bora Bora lagoon. Known to be home to some of the most beautiful islands and lagoons in the world, the Society islands play host to an array of tourist activities and offer some spectacular cruising. to not be on board for the passage.



# DAY 14 - 15<sup>★</sup>

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## MOOREA

Moorea – “The magical island” Moorea appears as a tropical garden, filled with silver pineapple fields. Close inside the reef it is possible to snorkel with rays, touch their backs and get your photo with the ray, lots of diving off the reef pass entrance and opportunities for Dolphin safaris.

## MOUNT ROTUI, MOOREA

It is definitely one of the most complete islands of the archipelago in terms of what it has to offer both on and under the water and great land activities. Deservedly nicknamed “the magic island”, the scenery is truly magical and simply breathtaking.

***Humpback whales are encountered around the island during the Austral Winter (July to November each year) to find a mate or give birth.***

If the opportunity of an encounter occurs, whale watching could be arranged with your guide (if a guide has been employed) who has been trained to approach them while respecting them and who holds a dolphin and whale watching governmental authorization. Moorea is the perfect place for this kind of encounter.

# DAY 14 - 15

## SHORE BASED ACTIVITIES, MOOREA

- Quad bike adventures
- Visit the historical artefacts
- Visit the Local Distillery
- Hike up mountainous terrain to reach heights with some of the most incredible views in the world.

## SURFING MOOREA

Moorea is good during the south swell season when it's big and good for carving the long right handers at Temae by the airport, or for the nice lefts of Haapiti. However, the hottest zone for cylindrical lefts is Tahitian south-west coast. In Cook's Bay and Opunohu Bay, the latter features low amplitude waves where even children can practice.



# DAY 15

## MOOREA - HUAHINE

Remain in Moorea for the day soaking up the scenery and enjoying the many activities the island has to offer. Depart after dinner for an overnight voyage to Huahine.

Route: Moorea to Huahine  
Distance: 80nm  
Time: 8 hours

## DISTANCES

**Route** Moorea - Huahine  
**Distance** 80 nautical miles  
**Time** 8 hour (approx) overnight





## HUAHINE

Arrive at Huahine early morning. Surf/wind surf, possible dive and explore village ashore. Overnight in Huahine.

Huahine “The garden of Eden”. This Island would be the less developed of the group with a very small village. After anchoring off the town of “Fare” and exploring the village move to “Baie Bourayne” this fantastic land locked anchorage is great for water sports and the reef is close by for snorkeling.

This island has the most extensive and preserved archaeological remains in French Polynesia.

## SHORE BASED ACTIVITIES, HUAHINE

- Horse riding.
- Fish parks.
- Botanical gardens
- Lagoon safaris.

## SURF INFO, HUAHINE

Huahine has a reputation in the world as being one of Tahiti’s surfing hotspots. That’s because it is... Next to Tahiti, this island gets more surfers than any other island in French Polynesia. The reason for this is the waves and swell here is large, constant, and simply awesome!

The break is on the south side of the motu, or second inlet. Fare, Fiti and Parea feature reef waves all year round. The Ava Mo’a pass facing the village of Fare is a surfing spot well known in the Pacific.



# DAY 17 - 18

## RAIATEA & TAHAA

Set sail in the early morning for Raiatea and Tahaa.

Explore the many bays and beaches, surf, windsurf and snorkel. Both of these islands are in the same lagoon with a small stretch of open water separating them. Anchor off the main town of Tahaa and visit ashore at the township, have lunch on board and move to one of the "Motu" anchorages for swimming. Raiatea "The Sacred Island" and Tahaa "The Vanilla Island". Raiatea is the second most economic zone for French Polynesia and an important cultural and spiritual centre. Arrive at one of the anchorages off a "Motu" which is a small sandy Island off the entrance just before noon, excellent snorkeling and beach, have lunch and explore the underwater gardens. Anchor off one of the pearl farms and visit ashore for some pearl shopping.

Remain the following two evenings at this anchorage.

## DISTANCES

**Route** Huahine - Raiatea & Taha'a

**Distance** 27 nautical miles

**Time** 3.5 hours



# DAY 19 - 21<sup>★</sup>

25

## BORA BORA

Depart for Bora Bora early morning, distance is 25 miles, arrive approx 1100. Explore the inside of the reef by tender, watch the shark feeding snorkel and beach.

Explore the island by land, visit the highest point on the island and see the whole lagoon and its amazing colours. The main pass also has a couple of dives.

## DISTANCES

**Route** Raiatea & Taha'a - Bora Bora

**Distance** 25 nautical miles

**Time** 2 hours approx

# DAYS 19 - 21<sup>★</sup>

## BORA BORA

Bora Bora “The Romantic Island” This Island has the most spectacular lagoon in the world, a must to take a four wheel drive to the summit which overlooks the lagoon. Captain Cook named her “The Pearl of the Pacific”.

Excellent snorkeling off any of the numerous “Motus”. Bora-Bora’s some 6,000 inhabitants know that they are living inside a true Tropical Garden of Eden, and their main preoccupation (as well as their greatest pride) consists in sharing their easy living, and making your stay unforgettable.

Maupiti Option: Known as “The Authentic Island” A seldom visited island, very narrow pass entrance but worth the effort, very little development and very friendly natives that are happy to have visitors. The main island is surrounded by five “Motu’s” which offers an excellent lagoon and underwater gardens. Distance from Bora Bora is 30 miles, approx 3 hours.

Disembark in Bora Bora for connecting flight to Papeete International Airport.

