

**100  
Things to Do  
on  
the Island of  
Tahiti**

## Legend of Tahiti the Fish

Here is the legend of Tahiti the Fish (recited in 1822 and 1824 by King Pomare II, by Mahine, a chief, and by Tamera, a priest) :

Tahiti did not always stand where it now is. Tahiti was transplanted here in the east from Great Havai'i (Ra'iatea), hence the name Tâ-hiti (Transplanted).

It came away as a huge fish, and then became land again; it resembled a ship with a great figurehead. It formed part of Havai'i, connecting it with Uporu (Taha'a). The sea was filled with it inland from Hiva (Clan) by Opoa (Indented), to the outer border of Uporu. All was one land, Great Havai'i, that swept inwards and outwards.

Tahiti was a tract of land owned by the warriors, Vai-ta-fa'i (Fixed by revelation), Tera-tai (That-sea), Tai-to'a (Rocky-sea), Tautai (Fisherman), Tai-nui-area (Great boundless-sea), Tai-ta'ata (Sea-of-people), Marua-to'a (Fall-of-rocks), Pau-fata (Consumed-on-altar), Peu-ru-aro (Habit-of-speedy-fighting), Maro (Persistence), Mavete (Unfolding), Te-uri (Darkness), and Te-'ehu (The blonde).

*The Departure of the Fish, excerpt from "Ancient Tahiti" by Teuira Henry (pages 437-438).*

---

# 100 Things to Do in Tahiti

## Sporting Activities

### 1. Go Scuba Diving :

Tahiti has a variety of sites for all levels of divers and is a good place to get certified. There are a variety of dive sites in Tahiti, with subjects ranging from wrecks to sharks. The Aquarium is where one goes to feed fish by hand. Fish come in such abundance that it is sometimes difficult to see a few yards ahead. Ocean World is adjacent to the Méridien Tahiti hotel. CAMS & PADI lessons are available. Phone 47.07.07, Fax : 47.07.08, E-mail : [oceanworld@mail.pf](mailto:oceanworld@mail.pf)

Aquatica. Phone : 53.34.96, fax : 43.10.65, E-mail : [aquatica@mail.pf](mailto:aquatica@mail.pf)

Tahiti Plongée, located at Marina Lotus, nine kilometers from Papeete, is headed by Henri Pouliquen.

CAMS & PADI lessons are available. Phone : 41.00.62, Fax : 42.26.06, E-mail : [plongee.tahiti@mail.pf](mailto:plongee.tahiti@mail.pf)

Iti diving, discover the unique peninsula of Tahiti. Phone/fax: 57 77 93, E-mail: [itidiving@mail.pf](mailto:itidiving@mail.pf)

### 2. Cruise on a Catamaran with or without a Skipper

The popularity of bare boat charters in Tahiti has grown tremendously over the last five years. This entails renting a fully provisioned boat for several days or several weeks. Those who are not up to actually sailing the vessel on their own have the option of "renting" a skipper and even a host or cook, as well.

Tahiti Yacht Charter in Papeete is based in the Vaima Center.

Phone : 45.04.00, Fax : 42.76.00, E-mail : [tyc@mail.pf](mailto:tyc@mail.pf)

### 3. Take Sailing Lessons

If you want to learn sailing, Tahiti is an excellent place to do it. No wetsuits are required in Tahiti's year-round warm ocean, and there are a couple of spots on the island that are absolutely perfect for learning. Learning to sail takes determination, stamina and good wind and sea conditions. Remember, there is probably no better place in the world to learn sailing than Tahiti.

Arue Yacht Club. Phone : 42.78.03, fax : 43.13.00, E-mail : [yctahiti@mail.pf](mailto:yctahiti@mail.pf)

Tahiti Nautic Centre. Phone: 57 94 94, Fax: 57 05 07, E-mail: [tnc@mail.pf](mailto:tnc@mail.pf)

### 4. Experience a Mountain Safari by 4-Wheel Drive

Crossing Tahiti via the Papenoo valley. The interior of the island can be crossed on a trail that follows the large valley, rich in archaeological sites and spectacular views of impressive waterfalls.

Natura Exploration in Punaauia. Phone: 43.03.83, fax: 43.03.99, E-mail: [natura.explo@mail.pf](mailto:natura.explo@mail.pf)

Tahiti Safari Expedition. Phone : 42.14.15, fax : 42.10.07, E-Mail: [tahiti.safari@mail.pf](mailto:tahiti.safari@mail.pf)

[www.Tahiti-safari.com](http://www.Tahiti-safari.com)

Patrick Adventure. Phone/fax: 83.29.29.

## **5** ■ **Try Surfing**

The north coast offers good surfing, where there are both beach breaks and reef breaks. The best time to surf is actually in the winter, where there are big waves caused from storms in Antarctica and New Zealand. The southern coast of the island has the most breaks, with the exception of the Papara waves. Some of the popular reef breaks are: Taapuna pass (PK 10), Paea (PK 14,5) , Papara ( PK 36).

Moana Surf Tours in Punaauia will provide guides or put together any combination of surfing, lodging and boat. Phone/fax : 43.70.70, E-mail : [moanasurftours@mail.pf](mailto:moanasurftours@mail.pf)

Tura'i Mata'are Surf School gives surfing and body board lessons. Phone : 41 91 37 / 77 27 69, E-mail : [surfschool@mail.pf](mailto:surfschool@mail.pf)

## **6** ■ **Watch a Surf Competition**

Look around you ! You're in Tahiti, surrounded by beauty, the water is warm and the sky is blue, and you stand up on your board and catch that wave.

The dates of surfing competitions depend on the size of the waves during a specified period of time. Check the local newspaper, ask the desk clerk, or call a surf shop for up to the minute dates and times. The Billabong Tahiti Pro is normally held each May. This is the Top 44 WCT (world competition tour), which takes place on the west side of Tahiti Iti, in the mythic waves of Teahupoo.

## **7** ■ **Try Bodysurfing or Bodyboarding**

If the breaking waves beckon to you but you're not quite ready to commit to standing up on a surfboard, try bodysurfing. Bodysurfing is the art of using your body for maneuvering on a wave. There are several places to practice in Tahiti : Taapuna Pass, Paea, Tapuaeaha, Ava iti, etc.

## **8** ■ **Learn Windsurfing**

Windsurfing has become very popular in Tahiti over the last decade. There's an abundance of warm water and gentle breezes in Tahiti, so it is an excellent place to windsurf.

Arue Sailing School gives windsurfing lessons. Phone : 42.23.54, fax : 43.13.00, E-mail : [evatahiti@mail.pf](mailto:evatahiti@mail.pf)

## **9** ■ **Tee Off at the International Golf Course of Atimaono**

The Olivier Breaud International Golf Course is a 6,944-yard, par 72 course, and is Tahiti's only 18-hole golf course. It's a real pleasure to play golf in the extraordinary beauty of this site (PK 41).

Phone: 57 43 41, fax: 57 46 83

## **10** ■ **Go for an Outing on a Quad**

Discover the Papenoo Valley and the heart of the island by Quad, with river crossings, waterfalls and pure mountain streams. Enjoy a day you will never forget. PK 18.

Polynesie Quad. Phone/fax: 53.33.90.

## **11** ■ **Try Horseback Riding**

There are several first-class facilities available in Tahiti; the horses are usually from the Marquesas Islands. You can enjoy long rides into the heart of Secret Mountain.

Club Equestre de Tahiti. Pirae race track. Phone : 42.70.41, fax : 42.11.94

L'Eperon de Pirae. Phone/fax: 42.79.87

Gauguin Ranch. Phone: 57.51.00, fax: 57.20.20

## **12** ■ **Take a Flying Lesson**

Go for a flight-seeing tour or take an introductory flying lesson.

Aero-Club de Tahiti. Phone : 82.58.02

UTA Aero-Club. Phone: 83.81.09, fax: 85.43.58

## **13** ■ **Drive a Go-Kart**

Would you like to know how it feels to be strapped into a go-kart feel how it grips the turns and accelerates ? Have you always wanted to learn the limits of your own automobile ? Tahiti Fun Kart offers driving courses. Why not try it !

Tahiti Fun Kart. Phone : 42.69.28 or 82.11.35

Full-day, half-day and 1 hour rentals.

## **14** ■ **Go Deep-Sea Fishing**

Deep-sea fishing is a very popular recreational activity for visitors to French Polynesia. Game fish include marlin, yellow fin tuna, sailfish, swordfish, mahi mahi, barracuda and other pelagic fish.

Natupa. Phone : 42.18.34, fax : 42.18.35, E-mail : [moananui@mail.pf](mailto:moananui@mail.pf)

Hotel Le Méridien Tahiti. Phone : 47.07.07

## **15** ■ **Snorkel at a Plane Wreck**

Enjoy snorkeling in a beautiful site and dive down below the ocean's surface in the warm current, where you can see schools of colorful fish nibbling on the coral reef. Watch hundreds of silvery needlefish as they dart about in perfect sparkling unison.

## **16** ■ **Kayak in the Lagoon**

Discover the lagoon by kayak. The windward side of Punaauia is one of the most highly acclaimed beaches in Tahiti. The sea kayaks most often used in Tahiti are designed for cruising and sightseeing.

Tahiti Evasion. Reservations. Phone/fax : 43.22.33, E-mail : [tahitievason@mail.pf](mailto:tahitievason@mail.pf)

Hotel Le Méridien Tahiti. Phone: 47.07.07

## 17 ■ Ride in an Outrigger Canoe

The sparkling surf gently rolls in to caress the sandy beach and the sun is bright in the blue sky. The Polynesian style canoe is uniquely designed with a single-hull and attached outrigger. This type of canoe has been in existence for more than 1,000 years and is capable of traveling across the open ocean, then maneuvering to the shore over the shallow reef.

## 18 ■ Try Water Skiing

Introductory and advanced water-ski lessons with a qualified instructor; also wake-board, ski-tubes, mono-ski and barefoot skiing lessons are available.

Ski Nautique Club de Tahiti in Punaauia. Phone : 77.22.62, fax : 41.26.09,

E-mail : [patou-nadou@mail.pf](mailto:patou-nadou@mail.pf)

Tahiti Nautic Center in Taravao (PK 56). Phone : 57.20.70, fax : 57.05.07,

E-mail : [tnc@mail.pf](mailto:tnc@mail.pf)

Hotel Le Méridien Tahiti. Phone : 47.07.07

## 19 ■ Experience Barefoot Skiing

Barefoot water skiing has become popular in Tahiti, and is available in several parts of the island.

Barefoot skiing requires a higher level of fitness and is a pleasant adventure. The water is warm year-round, the sun usually shines, and the ocean cooperates particularly well in some spots, primarily at Marina Taina.

Ski Nautique Club de Tahiti. Phone : 77.22.62, fax : 41.26.09

## 20 ■ How About a Hang Gliding Lesson

This sport is unique in Tahiti because of the marvelous beauty of the mountain sites and the multiple rocky points that serve as launching pads for hang gliders. Come and discover a bird's eye view of Tahiti from the sky.

Air Evasion. Phone : 43 39 35, E-mail: [polairbf@ifrance.com](mailto:polairbf@ifrance.com)

## 21 ■ Try Underwater Spear Fishing

You need to contact the Polynesian federation.

Address: BP 650, Papeete. Sporting department, phone : 42.97.67

## 22 ■ Skysurf at Motu Martin

International fly-surf school. Phone: 42.45.28 / 70 07 75, E-mail : [courrier@moanareva.com](mailto:courrier@moanareva.com)

## 23 ■ Fish for Mahi Mahi

A traditional fishing technique used in Polynesia.

Ocean World. Hotel Le Méridien Tahiti. Phone 47.07.07

## **24 ■ Hunt Wild Pigs (cochon sauvage)**

Contact the president of the Association de Chasseur de Punaauia at the Punaauia town hall (Mairie).

Phone: 45.04.04

Tatumu BE in Punaauia. Phone: 42 29 92

## **25 ■ Watch an Outrigger Canoe Race**

Racing pirogues are slender canoes around 25 feet long. All have an outrigger attached to one side and are manned by one, three, six or more paddlers. These racing canoes are used in several international class competitions each year.

## **26 ■ Hike Aorai Mountain**

Climbing Mount Aorai (2,066 m.) is a very pleasant walk and can be done without a guide. There are many professionals offering different levels of hikes and mountain climbing of 1-4 day circuits.

Tiare Mato Expeditions. Phone/fax : 43.92.76, E-mail : [tiaremate@mail.pf](mailto:tiaremate@mail.pf)

Tahiti Evasion. Phone/fax: 56.48.77, E-mail [tahitievason@mail.pf](mailto:tahitievason@mail.pf)

## **27 ■ Take a 4-Wheel Drive Excursion to Mount Marau**

Half- or full-day trips in the luxuriant tropical forest.

Tahiti Safari Expedition. Phone: 42.14.15, Fax: 42 10 07, E-mail: [tahiti.safari@mail.pf](mailto:tahiti.safari@mail.pf)

# 100 Things to Do in Tahiti

## Cultural Activities

### **28** ■ Visit the Museum of Tahiti and Her Islands

An historic area where there was once a marae, a major religious structure. The museum's collections cover archaeology and displays of the native Polynesian natural environment, Polynesian material culture, technology and skills.

Phone : 58.34.76, fax : 58.34.00, E-mail [musee@mail.pf](mailto:musee@mail.pf)

### **29** ■ Visit the Black Pearl Museum

This is the only museum in the world dedicated to pearls. Multiple displays will show you the various aspects of art, history, mythology, philosophy and religion that are associated with pearls, as well as technical explanations. You will find a collection of pearl producing oysters and shells. Open daily.

Phone: 45.21.22, fax : 45.48.92, E-mail : [pearlmuseum@tahitiperles.com](mailto:pearlmuseum@tahitiperles.com)  
[www.tahitiperles.com](http://www.tahitiperles.com)

### **30** ■ Discover the Anchors of Captain Cook and Bougainville

In 1769 Captain James Cook arrived in Tahiti on the HMS Endeavour. He anchored in Matavai Bay to record the transit of the planet Venus as it crossed the face of the sun. This beach park is now called Point Venus. Louis-Antoine de Bougainville anchored in Tahiti on August 6, 1768, at PK 38 on the east coast of Hitiaa. You can visit these historic sites while driving around the island.

### **31** ■ Discover the Marae Temples

The marae or "pagan temples" of the ancient Polynesians were built to worship their gods, which sometimes differed from one island to another. There are several kinds of marae; some are public and others are private. These religious sites contain various stone block structures that were dedicated to the old gods. The sites in Tahiti include : Marae Mahaiatea, Arahurahu, Anapua, and Farehape. Marae Arahurahu (PK 22.5) is a restored construction of dry stones.

In addition to its use as a place of worship, this marae was also used for important events such as crowning kings, for weddings, war councils and celebrating battle victories.

This site is located in a lovely valley and serves as an open-air theater for historical re enactment ceremonies that are performed each July and August following the Heiva Festival.

### **32** ■ Visit the Paul Gauguin Museum

An amazing retrospective on the life of Paul Gauguin, the famous French artist who spent his final years in Polynesia. Gauguin's art had a profound influence on the primitive and exotic painters and sculptors of the 20th century.

Open daily. Phone : 57.10.58, fax : 57.10.42, E-mail : [museegauguin@mail.pf](mailto:museegauguin@mail.pf)

### **33 ■ Visit the Petroglyphs of Te Pari**

The wild sea cliffs of Te Pari are located at Fenua Aihere on the southern end of the Tahiti-Iti peninsula, situated between Hihitera point and the Vaipoiri River.

Tahiti Safari Expedition. Phone : 42.14.15 / 77.80.76, Fax: 42 10 07

### **34 ■ Visit the James Norman Hall Museum**

At PK 5.4 on the mountainside in Arue, this museum is in the rebuilt home of the late

American writer, James Norman Hall. Phone: 50 01 61, E-mail: [jamesnormanhall@mail.pf](mailto:jamesnormanhall@mail.pf)

### **35 ■ Discover the Stars of the Southern Hemisphere**

The Astronomers' Society of Tahiti (SAT) invites the public (8 years up) to their observatory every Friday and Saturday night to watch the astral performances of the moon, stars, planets, galaxies and meteor showers through their powerful telescopes.

Located in Faa'a at the Cité de l'Air.

Phone/fax: 82.17.83 or mobile phone: 77.99.57,

E-mail: [astronomie-tahiti@inorbit.com](mailto:astronomie-tahiti@inorbit.com)

### **36 ■ Visit the "Tikis"**

Religious Tahitian art. Tikis are anthropomorphic ancestor images in stone or wood. You can see several tikis at the Museum of Tahiti and Her Islands and there are a few stone tikis at the Paul Gauguin Museum. These statues were used in the ancient Polynesian society as intermediaries between man and the world beyond, guardians of sacred sites and properties, as well as for land markers, tutelary spirits for houses and canoes, and as the right hand for sorcerers.

### **37 ■ Visit Paofai Temple of Papeete**

This major church in town is a Protestant temple, which is located on Boulevard Pomare. Constructed in 1873, this large attractive structure is supported by two rows of six powerful old oak columns. During church services every Sunday morning you can listen to the himenes (hymns) and admire the women's hats. It is preferable to wear white when attending church.

### **38 ■ Visit an Arts and Crafts Village**

Tahiti and Her Islands are a shopper's dream featuring a mind-boggling array of merchandise: exquisite, one-of-a-kind black pearl jewelry, decorous handcrafted garments, gorgeous woven goods and stunning carved items. For art lovers, our galleries are filled with a variety of paintings, sculptures and crafts. From primitive to contemporary, the artisans of French Polynesia are as inspiring as the Islands themselves.

## **39** ■ Discover the Garden of Matatia and Vaipahi

This garden at PK 49 in Mataiea specializes in heliconias, green plants and other tropical flowers. You can take a leisurely hike to a nearby waterfall, surrounded by red and pink and torch ginger. From the black sand beach across the road you will have a lovely view of Tahiti-iti.

## **40** ■ Swim in the Grotto Caves of Mara'a

This is the sort of natural wonder that everybody would like to see and stop to admire. Fern bordered caves are deeply thrust into the mountainside and contain a small lake with chilly waters. This grotto has no particular importance or significance in the native traditions, although Queen Pomare IV and Paul Gauguin both swam in its refreshing lake. Its claim to fame rests on a slight optical illusion.

## **41** ■ Visit Art Galleries, Exhibits and Workshops

There are plenty of traditional art galleries in Papeete. Take time to appreciate the works of resident painters, sculptors and other artists.

Galerie Winkler. Papeete. Phone: 42 81 77

Galerie des Tropiques. Papeete. Phone: 41 05 00

Workshop Woita Prokop. Pirae. Phone: 42 71 71

Galerie Ganesha. Papeete. Phone: 43 21 54

Galerie Faaturuma. Papeete. Phone: 43 04 18

## **42** ■ Visit the Presidential Palace

"It was an historic site and so it will remain. For a little more than a century the Broche quartier was the meeting place of pages out of Tahiti's history." These words were spoken by Gaston Flosse, President of the French Polynesian government, during the inauguration of the presidency work site in 2000. Numerous Polynesians used their knowledge and skills as they employed the new techniques that were used in the construction of these impressive buildings. The landscape specialists created the harmonious gardens that lend a cool, refreshing look to the overall decor.

The Presidential Palace has become a conservatory of the most beautiful plants and flowers of Polynesia. You can visit the Presidency on appointment only. Phone : 47.21.34, Fax : 47.21.33

## **43** ■ See the Tomb of King Pomare V

Walk past the Protestant church at PK 4,7 in Arue to a point of land beside Matavai Bay and you will see the mausoleum of Pomare V, Tahiti's last monarch. This royal tomb is built of coral stones in a tower-like shape that is supposed to resemble a Grecian urn that has been painted red.

## **44** ■ Visit the Chinese Temple

This classic oriental temple, with its pagoda roof made from ceramic tiles, was built between April 1985 and May 1987, replacing an old wooden temple that was destroyed by fire in May 1981. Local historians estimate that the original temple dated back to around 1860.

---

# 100 Things to Do in Tahiti

## Land Activities

### **45** ■ Visit the Fautaua Valley

An easy 3-hour walk will bring you to this valley just a few kilometers east of Papeete. The Fautaua waterfall 296 m. (985 ft.) cascades over the volcanic cliffs into a large pool.

### **46** ■ Explore the Three Waterfalls of Fa'arumai

Leave the circle island road at PK 22 in Tiarei to reach these three waterfalls in the valley. The Viamahuta waterfall is 90 m. (295 ft.) high and is easily reached by walking across a bridge and following a well-defined path under a cool canopy of trees. The other two cascades require more effort and time. This is a "must" stop for most visitors to Tahiti and is worth the effort.

### **47** ■ Go Shopping in Papeete

Shopping in Papeete is a mixed bag. Quality and selections are good when you are looking for black pearl jewelry, pareos painted in bright colors and attractive patterns, woven handbags and vanilla. At the Vaima Center you will find chic boutiques, which are a mecca for Papeete's French and European community.

### **48** ■ Discover the Blowhole

One of Tahiti's biggest roadside attractions is the Blowhole of Arahoho, located in Tiarei on the east coast.

### **49** ■ Discover the Maroto

You will go into the heart of the island when you visit this valley and the famous Lake Vaihiria, a natural body of water that is the home of the "eels with ears" legend.

### **50** ■ Visit the Botanical Garden and the Galapagos Tortoises

This garden was established in 1919 by Harrison Smith, an American physics professor. He introduced a range of tropical shrubs, trees and flowers to the islands from throughout the world. The spacious garden is laced with footpaths that wend their way through acres of well-tended palms, hibiscus, bamboo, bananas and Tahitian chestnut trees (mape). There are also Galapagos tortoises.

## **51 ■ Discover the Taravao Plateau**

This is another spectacular drive on the Tahiti-Iti peninsula, with Eucalyptus trees, orange groves, pineapple fields, Tiare Tahiti plantations and dairy farms. This plateau is more than 1,200 feet high and is blessed with a refreshing spring-like climate.

## **52 ■ Dine at Le Belvedere Restaurant**

Going to Le Belvedere is a highlight of Tahiti for many visitors, for the spectacular viewpoints of the city and Moorea from its perch almost 2,000 feet up in the cool hills above Papeete. A 5 pm pick-up from the hotels reaches the restaurant in time for sunset cocktails.

## **53 ■ Visit a Pottery Workshop**

The pottery atelier of Myriam PROKOP is located in Hamuta in the commune of Pirae.  
Phone: 42.71.71

## **54 ■ Visit Point Venus**

This site has great historical significance and it is also one of Tahiti's favorite beach parks, with a long black sand beach and good waves.

It is a welcome rest stop with natural amenities, such as shade trees, a river and cool breezes fanned by the trade winds. The lighthouse is still in operation.

## **55 ■ Explore the Orange Tree Plateau of Punaru'u**

The Punaru'u valley was formerly a fortress built by the French during the Tahitian uprising of 1844-1846. The road up the valley leads to a hiking trail up the Tamanu plateau, where wild oranges grow in profusion.

## **56 ■ Swim in the Matahia Spring**

Enjoy a swim in this lovely area.

## **57 ■ Visit the Belvedere of Taravao**

A short walk at the end of the road on the Taravao Plateau takes you to a lookout point where you will see beautiful panoramic views of the Tahiti-Iti peninsula and the narrow Isthmus of Taravao. Phone: 42.73.44, fax: 43.58.11

## **58** ■ **Get a Tattoo**

Tattoos have been an integral part of the Polynesian culture since ancient times.

Today about 60 % of the people in French Polynesia have a tattoo. Here more than anywhere else tattooing has come out of hiding and is no longer associated with bad boys, thugs or sailors. For the female gender it is rather a way of expressing interest in one's looks, while for the male gender it suggests a titan-like job. Indeed, tattooing in French Polynesia has become a fact of our daily lives.

Jordi's Tattoo Shop. Phone : 42.45.00, fax : 83.04.91

Polynesian Tattoo. Phone: 78.06.73, phone/fax : 41.29.00

Poonui Tatoo: 56 37 54

## **59** ■ **Learn How to Prepare Coconut Milk**

This typical Tahitian recipe starts with opening the coconut, grating the meat and squeezing out the milk.

## **60** ■ **Taste a Breadfruit**

Breadfruit is a symbol in French Polynesia, and helped to put Tahiti on the world map with the famous "Mutiny on the Bounty" that was associated with young breadfruit plants. You can taste breadfruit when you eat "Maa Tahiti" at the Captain Bligh restaurant. Phone : 43.62.90.

## **61** ■ **Enjoy "Maa Tahiti" Cooked in a Tahitian Oven**

"Maa Tahiti" is cooked in a traditional "ahima'a", a Tahitian earth oven. The main ingredients include succulent suckling pig, "fafa" (chicken and taro leaves), breadfruit, taro and other root vegetables, and delicacies such as "po'e", a sweet dish made with baked bananas, papaya and other fruit. You pour creamy coconut milk over it all and slurp it up with your fingers.

Picnics on the motu (islets) around the lagoon are often supplemented by a beach fire, where freshly caught lagoon fish such as the blue jacks (paaihere), emperor fish and small red snappers are grilled. The variety and abundance of fish from perch to wrasses and parrotfish, particularly in the Tuamotu, that are caught and eaten on the spot make up the daily menu that is always appreciated by fine food lovers.

You can taste some of these specialties on the Sunday buffet at the Captain Bligh Restaurant. Phone : 43.62.90 or at Le Méridien Tahiti the first Sunday of each month 47 07 07.

## **62** ■ **Taste Some Local Food : Poisson Cru**

This delicious fish salad, marinated with lime juice and served with coconut milk, can be considered Tahiti's national dish. This is called "poisson cru" and it is the most typical food in Tahiti. You can taste it at Le Méridien during the Polynesian buffet.

Le Méridien. Phone : 47.07.07

## **63** ■ **Try Tahiti's Regional Cuisine : Fafaru**

You can taste this traditional Tahitian dish at the lunchtime buffet served each Sunday at the Captain Bligh Restaurant. Phone: 43.62.90

## **64.** ■ **Go on a Sunset Cruise**

Enjoy a wonderful sunset cruise on the lagoon of Tahiti with Ocean World. Phone: 47.07.07

## **65.** ■ **Take a Day Trip to Tetiaroa**

Tetiaroa can be visited during an enjoyable day trip from Tahiti. This beautiful privately owned atoll lies 26 miles north of Tahiti. It consists of 12 small islets grouped in a circular configuration around a magnificent lagoon about 4.3 miles in diameter.

This is a 20-minute flight from Tahiti or you can go by boat.

Jet France: 56.15.62

# 100 Things to Do in Tahiti

## Night Life

### **66** ■ **Dine at Les Roulottes in Papeete**

You can find "roulottes" almost everywhere around Tahiti and especially each evening in Vaïete Square on the Papeete waterfront. These are itinerant restaurants where you can have dinner with your family. Everyone's tastes can be satisfied and you can even have a moveable feast, choosing from pizza, Chinese cuisine, waffles, crêpes, fish or steak and chips. You'll be happy with the good food and prices in this typically Tahitian ambience.

The recent renovation of Vaïete Square has helped to provide more sanitary and cheerful conditions for the "roulottes". Maybe you will be lucky enough to have dinner to the tune of ukulele music and Polynesian songs. Local musicians often entertain on the stage of a kiosk in the square that is close to the "roulottes" and friendly atmosphere. In spite of the low prices, you may have dinner next to a lawyer or doctor without being surprised. People from all walks of life meet there in the evenings and you cannot come to the Polynesian Islands without trying this experience. So, what would you fancy tonight? Chao Mien, pizza, "poisson cru", pancakes or a cheeseburger?

### **67** ■ **Watch a Drag Show at the Piano Bar**

This bar in downtown Papeete is a meeting place for Tahiti's third sex, the "mahu", and transvestite shows are usually performed around midnight. Phone : 42.88.24

### **68** ■ **Attend a Polynesian Show at Le Méridien Tahiti**

This famous evening features a lagoon buffet and a Tahitian show: dancing and songs of the islands.

Phone : 47.07.07

### **69** ■ **Have an Evening Out at Le Mana Rock Cafe**

If you want to sing at a karaoke, go dancing or just enjoy a Polynesian cocktail, this is a good place, and it is just in front of the port and Vaïete Square. Phone: 48 36 36, Fax: 48 36 37

### **70** ■ **Go Dancing at Le Kikiriri**

This is a good nightclub if you want to dance the traditional Polynesian two-step, waltz and tamure. Phone: 43 58 64

### **71** ■ **Go Nightclubbing at Le Grenier de Montmartre**

Entering this club is like stepping into a Parisian hot spot. The interior was saved from the wrecking ball in Paris, transported to Tahiti and reassembled in its present location.

---

# 100 Things to Do in Tahiti

## Recreative and Leisure Activities

### **72. Discover Giant Eels with Blue Eyes**

Tahiti's giant fresh water eels are a big attraction. These creatures have grown to six feet long from all the food and musty canned fish that has been tossed at them by villagers and visitors alike. Eels can live up to 30 years.

### **73. Discover the Dolphins**

Enjoy a boat ride inside the lagoon and watch out for dolphins. Each morning there are dolphins not far from Le Méridien.

Ocean World. Phone: 47.07.07

### **74. Join a Whale-Watching Expedition**

From July to November the humpback whales come up from Antarctica to breed and give birth in the waters surrounding Tahiti and Her Islands.

Ocean World. Phone: 47.07.07

### **75. Take a Circle Island Tour**

A single loop road takes you along the wild and rocky east coast of Tahiti, where you will see spectacular black sand beaches and joyful surfers riding their boards in the crashing waves. The east coast of the island is in contrast with the tamer west coast, which has peaceful lagoons and some white sand beaches.

### **76. Visit the Papeete Market**

An amazing array of fruit, fish, meat and lovely traditional arts and handcrafts can be found at the market in the heart of Papeete. "Le Marché" public market is in every sense the heart of the city. Open daily 5 am to 6 pm, the market reaches its peak of activity very early on Sunday mornings, when Tahitian families come to shop for their Sunday lunch and dinner. This is the perfect place for photographers.

### **77. Take a Helicopter Flight-Seeing Tour**

Get a bird's-eye view of Tahiti and Moorea.

Heli-Inter Polynesie. Phone : 86.60.29, fax : 81.99.99, E-mail : [helico-tahiti@mail.pf](mailto:helico-tahiti@mail.pf)

Heli-Pacific. Phone : 85.68.00, fax : 85.68.08, E-mail : [heli.pacific@mail.pf](mailto:heli.pacific@mail.pf)

## **78** ■ **Learn to Dance the "Tamure"**

Take lessons in traditional Tahitian dancing.  
Te Oro dancing school. Phone: 58 30 27 / 73 59 58

## **79** ■ **Enjoy a Plane Trip around Tahiti**

Soaring in a plane gives you a whole different view of the beautiful, idyllic scenery of Tahiti. Your flight style is up to you and you can also design your own tour, depending on the weather.  
Air Archipels. Phone : 81.30 30, Fax : 86.42.69

## **80** ■ **Dare to Walk on Fire**

This is a spectacular traditional Polynesian ceremony that remains from a distant past. Calling on the mysterious power of the divine superior spirit, there is magic, or perhaps a powerful suggestion by the master of ceremonies, who is a Tahitian "tahua" (high priest). The volcanic rocks are heated by a wood fire, and the "tahua" is the first to walk across the white-hot rocks, as he chants and beats the rocks with branches of "ti" leaves. He is followed by his assistants and some of the spectators who dare to walk barefoot across the burning coals.

## **81** ■ **Go on a Gourmet Tour**

Nearly every type of dining is possible in Tahiti, and the gastronomic circuit is the most enticing : Le Carré, the new lounge and gastronomic restaurant of Le Méridien, offers a very large choice of specialties combining the subtleties of French cuisine and the original exotic flavors of Polynesian cuisine.

You can try also Coco's, Casablanca, Corbeille d'Eau, l'O a la Bouche and the Auberge du Pacifique.

## **82** ■ **Visit the Lagoonarium**

You don't have to be a snorkeler or diver to enjoy the deep, for this underwater observatory contains sharks, reef fish, sea anemones, turtles and moray eels. There is also a good restaurant. (PK 11)  
Phone : 43.62.90, fax : 43.79.17

## **83** ■ **Discover Matavai Bay by Boat and Snorkel**

This historic bay was the anchorage for many of the early European navigators who visited Tahiti. Today there is a beach park at Point Venus and public facilities, as well as good snorkeling, swimming and sunbathing. Or you can sit under the shade trees.

## **84** ■ **Explore Lava Tubes**

The Lava Tubes of Hitiaa are underground galleries with water running through them, and they are fascinating to explore. It is preferable to go with a guide by four-wheel drive vehicle and then by foot. Situated on the rocky east coast, the lava tubes are of volcanic origin and are enclosed by channels or eroded sections of a narrow gut or cave that have been penetrated by water.  
Polynesian Adventure, Phone: 77 24 37, Fax: 43 25 95

## **85** ■ **Visit the Gauguin Restaurant and Fish Parks**

This is a restaurant beside the lagoon at PK 50.5, in Papeari, which is worth a stop just for the exceptional view of Tahiti-Iti. The menu suggests a wide selection of seafood.  
Next to the restaurant is a pier with several attached fish pens, where you can gaze at what may be your lunch. Phone: 57 13 80

## **86** ■ **Eat a French "Patisserie" in a Tea Room**

In Tahiti you can eat the best French pastry in the South Pacific, and there are plenty of "salons de thè" (tea rooms).  
Patisserie D. Hilaire, Mamao – Patachou, Fare Tony Papeete ...

## **87** ■ **Taste Liqueurs with the Flavors of Tahiti**

Free tasting of liqueurs made in Tahiti (13.5 percent alcohol) with the aromas of the islands : pineapple, coconut, banana, coffee, vanilla, ginger, mango, etc.  
Ava Tea Distillation. Phone: 53.32.43, fax: 53.17.27, E-mail: [avatea@mail.pf](mailto:avatea@mail.pf)

## **88** ■ **Attend a Coffee Roasting**

Visit Tahiti's coffee company and watch how they make tropical coffee.  
Cafe Fetia, Taofe Noanoa, Coffee of the Islands. Phone : 42.61.38. Fax : 43.25.91

# 100 Things to Do in Tahiti

## Unique Tahitian Activities

### 89 ■ Escape on a Motu Picnic

The small "motu" islets surrounding many of the islands are just right for an outdoor feast. These miniature, palm-covered paradises offer a get-away from the bustle of city life. You won't find roads, cars, markets or restaurants, just secluded atmosphere, pristine surroundings and a romantic ambience. Make a motu escape part of your vacation plans.

Enjoy a day at Motu Martin with Harold. Phone: 78.42.42, fax: 56.38.75

### 90 ■ Sign up for a Sentimental Wedding Ceremony

For couples wishing to renew their vows, or lovers looking for a unique and legally non-binding way to express their feelings, the traditional Tahitian wedding ceremony is a fun way to say "I do." Couples are bedecked in pareos, flowers and shells, and the groom approaches the beach in an outrigger canoe. The bride, who is carried in on a rattan throne, awaits her groom on the white sand beach. A spectacular sunset, lapping lagoon, Tahitian music and dancers enhance the ambience. A Tahitian priest performs the ceremony and gives the couple their Tahitian names.

Le Méridien de Tahiti. Phone : 47.07.07

### 91 ■ Take an Evening Walk at the New Waterfront Esplanade

In the evening the esplanade along the Papeete waterfront resembles a carnival. Many food vendors have "roulottes" with fancy neon signs and it's a lovely evening stroll.

### 92 ■ Hop Aboard a Le Truck

"Le truck" is Tahiti public bus service. It's the traditional Polynesian transportation system. You can try the Méridien "le truck" to go shopping in Papeete.

### 93 ■ Shop for Monoi

Monoi is a local product that is sold as soap, monoi oil, shampoo, body cream, suntan lotion and other items derived from this indigenous product. Monoi is a blend of the extracts of two plants : the *Nucifera* coconut and the fragrant tiare flower, *gardenia tahitensis*. Tahitians have used monoi oil for centuries as a salve or moisturizer. The homemade version of the oil is readily available at the Papeete market.

### 94 ■ Relax in our white sandy bottom swimming-pool

Enjoy this swimming-pool, the biggest of the South Pacific and don't miss to have a cocktail at the Pool Bar with an amazing view on the blue lagoon.

Phone : 47.07.07

## **95** ■ **Shop for a Tifaifai**

The “tifaifai” is a hand- or machine-sewn bedcover decorated with applique designs using plants, flowers and cultural themes. These motifs reflect the Polynesian love of nature. The tifaifai can be used as a quilt or to frame and hang on the wall as a tropical reminder of your visit to Tahiti. Annual “tifaifai” contests are held during arts and crafts fairs, which reveal the Polynesian’s creative inheritance. This exhibit is a festival of colors and designs.

## **96** ■ **Drink Hinano Beer**

The microbrewery and brewpub sensation has arrived in Tahiti. The Brasserie de Tahiti brews Hinano, Tahiti’s favorite beer, which is very popular in Tahiti and overseas. You can order a Hinano wherever you go in Tahiti, but it’s a real pleasure to taste this original flavor while watching the sunset at the Pool Bar.

## **97** ■ **Take Home Some Vanilla**

Among the typical products to be found in Tahiti, do not forget vanilla. The islands of Tahaa and Huahine produce almost all the local vanilla found in Papeete's central market and grocery stores around the island. The beans are very rich in oil, and are larger and shinier than those of other varieties. You can also buy pure vanilla extract and powdered vanilla.

## **98** ■ **Buy Polynesian Fabrics**

If you want to take home some typical Polynesian fabrics, you can find bolts of this colorful material in the shops around the Papeete market. It is good for gifts as Polynesian fabrics are currently in fashion even in other countries.

## **99** ■ **Relax in our 47-Square Mile Hydrotherapy Pool**

Tapuaemai beach is a very slender strip of white sand several hundred yards long at PK 8.5 on the southern shore of Tahiti-Iti. You can also go to Autira beach at PK 18.4 On Tahiti Nui.

## **100** ■ **Go Shopping for Black Pearls**

Black Pearls are Tahiti’s largest and most unique export - indeed, they are grown almost exclusively in the lagoons of French Polynesia. Visitors can explore black pearl farms in Manihi, Rangiroa, Raiatea and Huahine. Before purchasing pearls, it’s a great idea to visit the Tahiti Perles Museum in Papeete to learn how to judge the value of a pearl based on its size, color and shape.

Sibani. Le Méridien. Phone: 47.07.80

# **100 Things to Do in Tahiti**

## **More Information**

### **Tahiti Tourisme**

Phone : 50.57.00. fax : 43.66.19

E-mail : [tahiti-tourisme@mail.pf](mailto:tahiti-tourisme@mail.pf)

[www.tahiti-tourisme.com](http://www.tahiti-tourisme.com)

---

### **Tahiti Manava Visitor's Bureau**

Phone : 50.57.12. fax : 45.16.78

E-mail : [infos@tahiti-manava.pf](mailto:infos@tahiti-manava.pf)

[www.tahiti-manava.pf](http://www.tahiti-manava.pf)

# 100 Things to Do in Tahiti

## Itinerary 1

### 6 Cultural and Leisure Days in Tahiti

#### Day 1

Have a leisurely breakfast at the Méridien and start your day tour of Tahiti Nui.

Stops: The first stop of the day should be at the Tomb of King Pomare V.

After visiting the former home of the American writer, James Norman Hall, stop at Point Venus (have a swim), Arahoho Blowhole, Fa'arumai Waterfalls and enjoy your lunch at the Restaurant du Musée. In the afternoon you can visit the Gauguin Museum and Botanical Garden, then stop at the beach of Papara and the Mara'a grotto. In the evening you can enjoy a Polynesian buffet and a Tahitian show with the Toa Reva dance group at Le Méridien Tahiti.

#### Day 2

Discover Papeete : Go to the Papeete market, the black pearl museum, the Paofai temple, arts and crafts village, the pottery artisan workshop of Myriam Prokop, the art galleries and the new waterfront esplanade. Take time for shopping. Come back to Le Méridien in time for a wonderful sunset cruise on the lagoon. Have dinner at the Plantation restaurant and go dancing at the Tamure Hut or the Kikiriri nightclub.

#### Day 3

Take a full day trip to Tetiaroa Island. Eat dinner at the "roulottes" or at Le Belvedere restaurant.

#### Day 4

Go on a full day trip around Tahiti-Iti. Start off with a visit to the Museum of Tahiti and Her Islands and the Lagoonarium, then proceed to the Marae of Arahurahu, the rum factory, Mataoa garden, Vaipahi garden, Afaahiti lookout point, the Taravao plateau and the Taravao belvedere. Come back to Le Méridien and enjoy cocktails at the Astrolabe and dinner at Coco's restaurant.

#### Day 5

Head out for a full day mountain safari through the Papenoo Valley. Photograph the restored marae temples, waterfalls, Lake Vaihiria and other sites in the Maroto valley. Stop at the Taharuu beach. Come back to Le Méridien and enjoy a dinner at the hotel.

#### Day 6

A full day trip will take you to discover the Petroglyphs of Te Pari. An evening buffet is accompanied by the Toa Reva fire dance show and Tiare Tahiti Band

# **100 Things to Do in Tahiti**

## **Itinerary 2**

### **6 Sporting and Leisure Days in Tahiti**

#### **Day 1**

Enjoy a full day of deep-sea fishing or scuba diving. Lunch is included. For dinner you will have a Polynesian buffet and a Tahitian show with the Toa Reva group at Le Méridien.

#### **Day 2**

A full day trip by quad will take you into the Papenoo valley and includes lunch. Sip a refreshing sunset cocktail at the Pool Bar and dine at Le Carré restaurant.

#### **Day 3**

Discover Papeete : Go to the Papeete market, the black pearl museum, the Paofai temple, arts and crafts village, the pottery artisan workshop of Myriam Prokop, art galleries and the new waterfront esplanade. Take time for shopping. Come back to Le Méridien in time for a wonderful sunset cruise on the lagoon. Have dinner at "les roulottes" or Le Belvedere restaurant and go dancing at the Tamure Hut or the Kikiriri nightclub.

#### **Day 4**

Hike to Aorai Mountain or take a mountain safari by 4-wheel drive up to Mount Marau. Lunch is included. Enjoy an evening buffet with the Toa Reva fire dance show and the Tiare Tahiti Band at Le Méridien.

#### **Day 5**

A full day of water activities includes a Dolphin discovery boat excursion, water skiing, snorkeling, paddling a kayak or outrigger canoe across the lagoon, and sky surfing. Lunch is served at Le Meridien's Te Moana's beach restaurant. In the evening dine on gastronomic cuisine at the restaurant l'O a la Bouche.

#### **Day 6**

Tee-off at the international golf course of Atimaono or go horseback riding or fishing for Mahi Mahi. Lunch is included. Enjoy sunset cocktails at L'Astrolabe and a gourmet dinner at Coco's restaurant.

# **100 Things to Do in Tahiti**

## **Polynesian Recipes**

### **Poisson Cru (Fresh Tahitian marinated fish)**

A refreshing salad composed of fresh fish cut in bite sized cubes and raw vegetables marinated in lime juice and coconut cream (for 4 people) :

1 kg. fresh tuna

2 carrots

2 tomatoes

8 limes

3 small green onions

1 clove garlic

1 small cucumber, the pressed cream of one grated coconut.

Cut the tuna in cubes and rinse with salted water. Let fish soak in the salted water in the refrigerator with a clove of crushed garlic, for half an hour. Grate coarsely or chop the vegetables. Drain the fish, then cover with the juice of the limes, allowing the fish to 'cook' for about five minutes in the lime juice. Drain and discard the lime juice. Add the

vegetables and the coconut cream to the fish. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Mix well, and serve chilled. Bon appetit !

### **Vanilla Scented Sweet Potato Cream**

Preparation Time: 30 min

Cooking Time: 40 min

Ingredients for 6 people:

800 g sweet potatoes

1 vanilla bean

150 g sugar

2 glasses lukewarm water or milk

Calories: 250 Kcal/pers.

Utensils: Mixer or a food mill

Recommendation:

Use sugar according to taste and garnish with whipped cream

Can be used as a cream for pastries, cakes or pancakes

The sugar can be replaced by condensed milk

Preparation

1. Ready all the ingredients and utensils

2. Clean the potatoes and cook them unpeeled in slightly sugared water for 30 to 40 min. The potatoes have to be well cooked (the skin breaks and loosens). Drain and peel. Mix the potatoes with the sugar and vanilla (use only the seeds inside the vanilla bean) and a little water. Add water according to the consistency required and add sugar according to taste.

3. Chill before serving. Serve the cream in cups.

---

# 100 Things to Do in Tahiti

## Bibliography

### **Guide Books**

Tahiti & French Polynesia  
Guide. Jan Prince. 2000  
Tahiti & French Polynesia.  
Lonely Planet. 2000  
Tahiti & French Polynesia  
Diving. Lonely Planet. 2000  
Tahiti Circle Island Tour  
Guide. Les-Editions-du-  
Pacifique. 1985  
Cruising Guide to Tahiti and  
the French Society Islands.  
Marcia Davock. Julius M.  
Wilensky. 1985.

### **General and Specific Books**

Jean-Louis Saquet  
The Tahiti Handbook. Te  
Fenua  
Avant et Apres. 2000

J.E Randall & P.C Heemstra  
Indo-Pacific Fishes. 1991

Garden of Eden. Polynesian  
Flora.  
Beliefs. Medicine, Daily Life.  
Pacific Events

Jack and Dorothy Fields  
South Pacific

J.Galopin  
Tahitian Island Cooking  
Arapoanui Edition

Pareo de Tahiti  
Pacific Promotion Tahiti SA  
Promotion. 1995

Gotz  
Polynesian Tattoo. Past &  
{resent  
Pacific Promotion Tahiti SA  
Production

Flowers of Tahiti.  
Vol. 1

Papeete. Pacific Promotion  
Tahiti SA Production

J.F Dilhan & J.L Saquet  
Pearls of Tahiti  
Collection Survol. 1997

T. Zysman  
Diving in Tahiti  
Les-Editions-du-Pacifique

B. Salvat & C. Rives  
Shells of Tahiti  
Les-Editions-du-Pacifique.

Renée Roosevelt Denis  
To Live in Paradise

James Norman Hall  
The Forgotten One  
Centennial Edition

Jack London  
South Sea Tales

James A. Michener  
Rascals in Paradise

Briand  
In Search of Paradise

R. Craig  
Captain Cook in the Pacific

E. Christian & R. Bagnis  
Island of Tahiti  
Kea Edition

E. Christian  
Tahiti from the Air  
Les-Editions-du-Pacifique

James Siers  
Tahiti. Romance and Reality

E. Christian  
Light in the Lagoon  
Kea Edition

### **Books in French**

Paul Gauguin  
Oviri. Ecrits d'un sauvage  
(Writings of a Savage)

Pierre Loti  
Le mariage de Loti  
(The Marriage of Loti)  
Flammarion

Journal de James Morrison  
(Journal of James Morrison)  
Papeete. 1981

Bougainville  
Voyage autour du monde  
(Voyage Around the World)  
Folio classic

Argod Robert.  
Nouveau regard sur les  
migrations polynésiennes : la  
plus grande aventure  
maritime de tous les temps  
Papeete, 1997  
(A new look at the  
Polynesian migrations : the  
biggest maritime adventure  
of all time)

Guillon-Raynal, Claire  
La maison de Taoua,  
Papeete 1999.  
(The house of Taoua)

Danielsson B.  
Tahiti autrefois. Hibiscus  
Editions.  
(Ancient Tahiti)

Bougainville L-A de  
Voyage autour du monde.  
Club des libraires de France.  
(Voyage Around the World).  
Library Club of France.

Bagnis, Raymond & Bennet,  
J. & Christian, Erwin &  
Mazellier, Philippe  
Poissons de Polynésie,  
Papeete  
(Fishes of Polynesia)