



PROGRAM 2016

ACTIVITIES IN THE TUAMOTU AND THE MARQUESAS ISLANDS WITH ARANUI

Itinerary subject to modification without prior notice

Day 1 – MORNING DEPARTURE FROM PAPEETE, TAHITI at 10h00 am

Day 2 – TUAMOTU ARCHIPELAGO – TAKAPOTO

Takapoto is a small, oval shape atoll of 20 km by 6 in the Tuamotu.

There will be a 15 minute walk to a magnificent white sand beach where we will have a picnic. You can swim and snorkel in the translucent lagoon to watch the colourful ballet of tropical lagoon fish. Art & craft at the beach. Return to vessel by 3:30 pm

Day 3 – AT SEA ON THE ARANUI

You can relax with a book on one of the sun decks, swim in the small pool or enjoy the immense South Pacific. Balmy evenings mean reading in lounge/library or chatting with an authority on Marquesan culture or archaeology. You'll probably spend many evenings socializing on the upstairs deck/bar with your fellow adventurers from around the world. The spirited Polynesian crew treat you like welcomed guests and proudly introduce you to their rich culture. Almost every night, they sing and strum hypnotic Polynesian rhythms on their ukuleles and will teach you to move your hips to hypnotic beat of the tamure.

After dinner, fix your watch 30 minutes ahead for Marquesan time.

Day 4 - THE MARQUESAS ARCHIPELAGO - NUKU HIVA (Taiohae-Hatiheu-Taipivai)

We sail into Taiohae's spectacular bay, a giant volcanic amphitheatre dominated by towering cliffs streaked with waterfalls. As the Aranui unloads, you can explore Taiohae, the tiny administrative capital of the Marquesas. Taiohae Bay is where a 23-year-old sailor, Herman Melville and buddy jumped a whaling ship in 1842. We follow their escape route by jeep along steep, winding dirt mountain roads to the village of Hatiheu to visit the archeological site of Kamuihei. We'll have lunch at Yvonne's Restaurant, one of the best restaurants in the Marquesas, where the specialty is pig baked in an underground oven. You'll meet the owner-chef, Yvonne, who also happens to be the town's energetic mayor. After lunch, we will travel to the valley of Taipivai. The area is dotted with stone tiki gods and sacred ritual sites (me'ae) and immense stone platforms (paepae) where the Taipi built their houses. Enigmatic petroglyphs of bird, sacred turtles and fish are carved on huge boulders. Hikers can take a steep trail to visit the Paeke site. Others can go back to the vessel.

The Aranui's whaleboats will sail down the beach to pick up passengers to the vessel, which is anchored in the Taipivai bay. Wet landing at the beach.

Day 5 – UA POU (Hakahau – Hakahetau)

From the desk, you'll see the soaring mountain spires of Ua Pou. Whenever the Aranui stops, villages greet it. As the muscular crew unloads supplies from cements to sugar and

loads sacks of copra (dried coconut meat), you'll explore the tiny town of Hakahau with its church with a hand-carved wooden dais. You can meet some talented woodcarvers and hike up a hill for a breathtaking view of the distant cloud-covered mountains. At Rosalie's Restaurant, you'll taste your first Marquesan lunch : breadfruit, a marquesan staple, along with curried goat, barbecued rock lobster, poisson cru (raw fish marinated in lime juice and soaked in coconut milk), taro and sweet red bananas.

Day 6 – TAHUATA (Vaitahu) & HIVA OA (Atuona)

TAHUTATA (Vaitahu)

In the morning, the Aranui will anchor in front of the island of Tahuata

On this leaf-shaped island, the air is thick with fragrant scent of tiare, frangipani and history. In the tiny village Vaitahu, Spanish explorers landed in 1595 and opened fire on a crowd of the curious islanders, killing about 200. When the first missionaries came in 1797, the generous local chief left his wife with missionary John Harris, with instruction that he treat her as his own wife. Harris fled the next day. Tahuata also is the site of the first French settlement in the Marquesas in 1842. The huge church built by the Vatican, is decorated with beautiful Marquesan carvings. Art & Craft at the village. Back on board by 10 am to sail to the island of Hiva Oa.

HIVA OA (Atuona)

We have plenty of time to explore Atuona, the second largest village in Marquesas. This is where Paul Gauguin lived and did some of his best work. You can visit the colonial store where Gauguin shopped and go into a replica of the Impressionist's infamous "House of Pleasure". As you walk up the hill of the cemetery, you'll have sweeping views of the harbor. Beneath a huge frangipani tree is a tombstone with the simple words : Paul Gauguin 1903. Nearby is the grave of another famous European who also was seduced by Hiva Oa : Belgian singer-composer Jacques Brel, who died in 1978. You'll also enjoy another lavish Marquesan lunch at Hoa Nui Restaurant. Free time in the village in the afternoon or hike to the point of view (scale of difficulty 7/10).

Day 7 – FATU HIVA (Omoa-Hanavave)

This is the most lush and remote island of the Marquesan. It's also a center of Marquesan crafts. As our guides lead you through the village of Omoa, you'll see women hammering mulberry, banyan or breadfruit bark on logs. They dry it and then paint ancient Marquesan designs on their famous' tapa cloth. Fatu Hiva is also well-known for its hand-painted pareos (sarongs) and monoi, a perfumed coconut oil scented with tiare blossoms and sandalwood. Skilled woodcarvers will invite you into their home/studios.

The Aranui sails to the other inhabited village. Hanavave is on the Bay of the Virgins, which is one of the world's most beautiful bays. Some athletic passengers may choose to make the trip by foot. On this unforgettable ten mile hike you'll have unforgettable views of towering cliffs and majestic waterfalls. (scale of difficulty 8/10)

Day 8 – HIVA OA (Puamau)

We'll travel by foot or by jeep to the most important archeological sites for tikis, the Mea'e Ipona (ancient, human-like religious sculptures) other than Easter Island. Our trained guides will show you these mysterious jungle ruins of Puamau and tell the stories of these haunting statues of an ancient civilization. Bring plenty of film. Swimm at the black sand beach, depending of the water condition.

TAHUATA (Kokuu)

The passengers will be going for a picnic in a beautiful white sand beach in Kokuu

Day 9 – UA HUKA (Vaipae-Hane-Hokatu)

Early in the morning, the Aranui will enter the small bay and be securely tied up on both sides of the edge.

We'll visit a museum with exquisite replicas of Marquesan art. Some Aranui passengers will explore the island by four-wheel drive, others will ride the Marquesan horses. For three hours, we will explore the mountain landscape with heart-stopping views of the Pacific. The wild horses (brought from Chile in 1856) thrive here, outnumbering the islands 476 residents. We'll have Marquesan lunch at local restaurant and have plenty of time to visit studios of woodcarvers. We'll visit the arboretum and the garden of fruits and flower. Back on the Aranui, it's Polynesian night with dancing and buffet dinner on the decks.

Day 10 – NUKU HIVA (Taiohae) AND UA POU

The Aranui will dock in Nuku Hiva at Taiohae in the morning. You may take the Le Truck back to the town center and spend free time there. At noon, the sip will sail to Ua Pou, returning to our first stop in the Marquesas, Hakahau. This is your last chance to buy Marquesan crafts.

Day 11 – AT SEA

Day 12 – TUAMOTU ARCHIPELAGO – RANGIROA

On lovely Rangiroa, the largest atoll in the world, the Aranui passengers can swim and snorkel in a translucent lagoon. Excellent snorkelling and scuba diving are available for people of all levels. "Rangi" is an underwater jewel box with stunning colors of corals and clouds of tropical fishes. You'll have the opportunity to purchase black pearls from local black pearl farmers.

Day 13 – SOCIETY ISLANDS – BORA BORA

The Aranui will anchor in the magnificent blue lagoon of Bora Bora.

Passengers will spent the day at the white sand beach, snorkling and picnic.

At the small cost, additional excursions will be available : island tour by the lagoon or by bus, swimming with rays and small sharks, helicopter tour.....


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Day 14 – MORNING ARRIVAL IN PAPEETE, TAHITI – BY 9:00 AM