

# Rarotonga & the Cook Islands



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## Why Go?

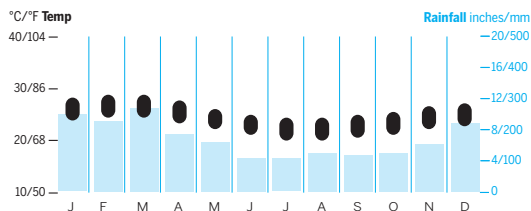
Fifteen droplets of land cast across 2 million sq km of wild Pacific blue, the Cook Islands are simultaneously remote and accessible, modern and traditional.

With a hip cafe culture, fine restaurants and funky nightlife, Rarotonga lives confidently in the 21st century. But beyond the island's tourist buzz and contemporary appearance is a robust culture, firmly anchored by traditional Polynesian values and steeped in oral history.

North of 'Raro', the sublime lagoon of Aitutaki is ringed with tiny deserted islands and is one of the Pacific's most improbably scenic jewels. Venture further and robust Polynesian traditions emerge nearer the surface. Drink home brew at a traditional 'Atiuan *tumunu* (bush-beer drinking club), explore the ancient *makatea* (raised coral cliffs) and taro fields of Mangaia, or swim in the underground cave pools of Mitiaro and Ma'uke. The even more remote Northern Group is a sublime South Seas idyll experienced only by a lucky few.

## When to Go

### Avarua



**Mar–Apr** The end of cyclone season usually brings clear, sunny days.

**Aug** Celebrate the nation's 1965 declaration of independence at the annual Te Maire Nui Festival.

**Sep–Oct** Look forward to warmer temperatures and reduced humidity.