

# Easter Island (Rapa Nui)

032

## Includes ➔

Hanga Roa.....	49
Parque Nacional	
Rapa Nui.....	58
Northern Circuit .....	58
Southwest Circuit .....	59
Northeast Circuit .....	59

## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Au Bout du Monde (p57)
- ➔ Te Moana (p57)
- ➔ Mikafé (p55)
- ➔ Tatakua Vave (p56)

## Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Cabañas Ngahu (p52)
- ➔ Hare Noi (p54)
- ➔ Cabañas Christophe (p52)
- ➔ Camping Mihinoia (p52)
- ➔ Cabalgatas Pantu – Pikera Uri (p54)

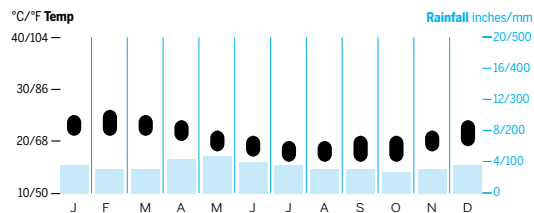
## Why Go?

Few areas in the world possess a more mystical pull than this tiny speck of land, one of the most isolated places on Earth. It's hard to feel connected to Chile, over 3700km to the east, let alone the wider world. Endowed with the most logic-defying statues in the world – the strikingly familiar *moai* – Easter Island (Rapa Nui to its native Polynesian inhabitants) emanates a magnetic, mysterious vibe.

But Easter Island is much more than an open-air museum. Diving, snorkelling and surfing are fabulous. On land, there's no better ecofriendly way to experience the island's savage beauty than on foot, from a bike saddle or on horseback. But if all you want to do is recharge the batteries, a couple of superb expanses of white sand beckon.

Although Easter Island is world famous and visitors are on the increase, everything remains small and personable – it's all about eco-travel.

## When to Go Easter Island



**Jan–Mar** Peak season. Highest prices and scarce hotels around February's Tapati Rapa Nui festival.

**Jul–Aug** Chilly weather, not ideal for beaches but a good time for hiking and horseback riding.

**Apr–Jun & Oct–Dec** The shoulder season is not a bad time to visit; the climate is fairly temperate.

## HANGA ROA

POP 6700

Hanga Roa is the island's sole town. Unbeatable it ain't, but with most sights almost on its doorstep and nearly all the island's hotels, restaurants, shops and services lying within its boundaries, it's the obvious place to anchor oneself. It features a picturesque fishing harbour, a couple of modest beaches and surf spots, and a few archaeological sites.

### Sights

#### Museo Antropológico Sebastián Englert

MUSEUM

(Map p55; ☎ 032-255-1020; [www.museorapanui.cl](http://www.museorapanui.cl); Tahai s/n; ☀ 9.30am-5.30pm Tue-Fri, to 12.30pm Sat & Sun) **FREE** This well-organised museum makes a perfect introduction to the island's history and culture. It displays basalt fishhooks, obsidian spearheads and other weapons, circular beehive-shaped huts, the ceremonial houses at Orongo and a *moai* head with reconstructed fragments of its eyes. It also features replica Rongo-Rongo tablets, covered in tiny rows of symbols resembling hieroglyphs.

According to oral tradition, these wooden tablets were brought here by Hotu Matua, along with learned men who knew the art of writing and reciting the inscriptions. Researchers have proposed various theories on the nature of the script, but it's still an enigma to decipher.

#### Caleta Hanga Roa & Ahu Tautira

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

Your first encounter with the *moai* will probably take place at **Ahu Tautira** (Map p55; Av Te Pito o Te Henua), which overlooks Caleta Hanga Roa, the fishing port in Hanga Roa at the foot of Av Te Pito o Te Henua. Here you'll find a platform with two superb *moai*.

#### Ahu Tahai

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

(Map p55) Ahu Tahai is a highly photogenic site that contains three restored *ahu*. Ahu Tahai proper is the *ahu* in the middle, supporting a large, solitary *moai* with no topknot. On the north side of Ahu Tahai is Ahu Ko Te Riku, with a topknotted and eyeballed *moai*. On the other side is Ahu Vai Uri, which supports five *moai* of varying sizes and shapes. Along the hills are foundations of *hare paenga* (traditional houses resembling an upturned canoe, with a narrow doorway).

#### Ahu Akapu

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

(Map p55) You'll find this *ahu* with a solitary *moai* along the coastline, north of Hanga Roa.

#### Caleta Hanga Piko & Ahu Riata

HARBOUR

(Map p55) Easily overlooked by visitors, the little Caleta Hanga Piko is used by local fishers. Facing the *caleta*, the restored Ahu Riata supports a solitary *moai*.

#### Iglesia Hanga Roa

CHURCH

(Map p55; Av Tu'u Koihu s/n) The unmissable Iglesia Hanga Roa, the island's Catholic church, is well worth a visit for its spectacular wood carvings, which integrate Christian doctrine with Rapa Nui tradition. It also makes a colorful scene on Sunday morning.

#### Playa Pea

BEACH

(Map p55) For a little dip, the tiny beach at Playa Pea, on the south side of Caleta Hanga Roa, fits the bill.



### Activities

#### Diving & Snorkelling

Scuba diving is increasingly popular on Easter Island. The strong points are the gin-clear visibility (up to 50m), the lack of crowds, the dramatic seascape and the abundance of pristine coral formations. The weak point is marine life, which is noticeable only in its scarcity.

Easter Island is diveable year-round. Water temperatures vary from as low as 20°C in winter to 26°C in summer.

Most sites are scattered along the west coast. You don't need to be a strong diver – there are sites for all levels. A few favourites include **Motu Nui** and the very scenic La Cathédrale and La Pyramide.

#### Mike Rapu Diving Center

DIVING, SNORKELLING

(Map p55; ☎ 032-255-1055; [www.mikeraipu.cl](http://www.mikeraipu.cl); Caleta Hanga Roa s/n; ☀ 8am-6.30pm Mon-Sat) This well-established operator offers introductory dives (CH\$40,000), single-dive trips (CH\$30,000) and courses. Prices drop by about 15% for more than three dives. Also runs snorkelling trips (CH\$15,000) to Motu Nui three days a week.

#### Orca Diving Center

DIVING, SNORKELLING

(Map p55; ☎ 032-255-0877; [www.orcadivingcenter.cl](http://www.orcadivingcenter.cl); Caleta Hanga Roa s/n; ☀ 8am-5pm Mon-Sat) This state-of-the-art outfit offers the full slate of diving adventures, including introductory dives (CH\$55,000), single dives (CH\$44,000), courses and packages, as well as snorkelling trips to Motu Nui (CH\$28,000).