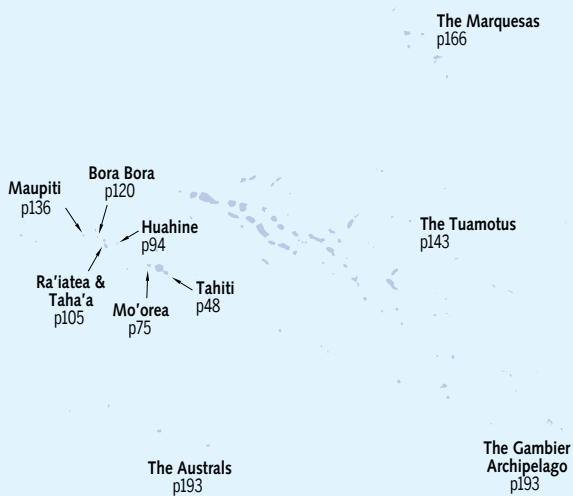


On the Road



Tahiti

POP 186,909

Includes ➔

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| Pape'ete | 51 |
| Around Tahiti Nui | 63 |
| West Coast | 63 |
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| Taravao & Tahiti Iti | 70 |

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Vanira Lodge (p73)
- ➔ Mitirapa Villa (p73)
- ➔ Taaroa Lodge (p67)
- ➔ Reva (p73)
- ➔ Intercontinental Resort Tahiti (p56)

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Place Vaïete Roulottes (p57)
- ➔ Le Lotus (p59)
- ➔ Blue Banana (p68)
- ➔ La Plage de Maui (p74)

Why Go?

What Tahiti lacks in wide white-sand beaches, it makes up for in waterfall-laden, shadowy mountains, unpretentiously beautiful black-sand beaches, sheltered blue lagoons and a distinctly Polynesian, modern buzz. This is the heart of the islands, where the cultures from all the archipelagos are mixed in the cacophonous, dusty, yet smiling and energetic capital of Pape'ete. Outside the city, explore the majestic, mountainous interior on a 4WD tour; learn to dive in the translucent lagoon, wander amid mystical archaeological sites, and from July to October go whale-watching. In July, catch the country's most spectacular festival; the percussion and dance-heavy Heiva. Stay at a resort or head to Tahiti Iti to experience a more traditional pace of life – all international air travel goes through Tahiti, and it would be a shame to miss such an essential part of this region's cultural puzzle.

When to Go

- ➔ Tahiti enjoys a year-round tropical climate, but you're most likely to get good weather in the dry season, from May to October. During this time the weather is cooler, and the drier west and north coasts in particular will likely have lots of sun and clear skies – but this is the tropics and rain is possible at any time of year.
- ➔ The rainy season begins in November and continues until the end of April, with frequent heavy showers and occasional storms, but you could also luck out and have clear skies.
- ➔ The island has a rather busy social calendar year-round, but in July Pape'ete is in full swing with the Heiva.