

# Bora Bora

POP 5757

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## Best Places to Stay

- » Sunset Hill Lodge (p134)
- » Intercontinental Bora Bora Resort & Thalasso Spa (p136)
- » Sofitel Bora Bora Private Island (p136)
- » Rohotu Fare Lodge (p134)

## Best Places to Eat

- » Maikai Bora Bora Marina & Yacht Club (p138)
- » Bora Kaina Hut (p139)
- » Fare Manuia (p140)
- » Villa Mahana (p139)

## Why Go?

This is it, the one. As you arrive by plane the view says it all. The promise of a wonderland is instantly made good: a ring of sand-edged *motu* (islets) encircle a glinting turquoise lagoon around soaring rainforest-covered basaltic peaks. With such a dreamlike setting, Bora Bora is, unsurprisingly, a honeymooners' choice. But there's much more to do than clinking glasses with the loved one in a luxurious hotel. Diving, snorkelling, lagoon tours, hiking and parasailing are readily available. What you shouldn't expect, though, is sweeping expanses of sand. With only one 'real' beach, Bora Bora is much more a lagoon destination. What makes the island so famous worldwide is those iconic over-the-water bungalows with piers reaching out like tentacles into the lagoon. This paradise is much more accessible than you think. As well as five-star resorts, a handful of quaint pensions and affordable midrange hotels beckon.

## When to Go

Try to make your trip coincide with the Heiva i Bora Bora (p134) in July or the Hawaiki Nui canoe race (p230) in November – two highly engaging events. June to October, the island's driest months, are the most popular, but keep in mind that the lagoon doesn't *always* look like a turquoise-backed mirror, especially from June to August, when the *maraamu* (southeast trade wind) blows. The rainiest months are from December to April; this is when the lagoon is often flat.

## History

James Cook sighted Bora Bora in 1769 on his first voyage to French Polynesia, and a London Missionary Society (LMS) base was established on the island in 1820. Bora Bora supported Pomare in his push for supreme power over Tahiti, but resisted becoming a French protectorate (established over Tahiti in 1842) until the island was annexed in 1888.

During WWII a US supply base was established here, prompted by the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941. From early 1942 to mid-1946 Operation Bobcat transformed the island and, at its peak, up to 6000 men were stationed on Bora Bora. Today the runway on Motu Mute is the clearest (and most useful) reminder of those frenetic days. Eight massive 7in naval cannons were installed around the island during the war; all but one are still in place.



## Bora Bora Highlights

**1** Discovering all the perks of a world-class resort on secluded **Motu Piti Aau** (p136)

**2** Ogling the stunning cerulean blue lagoon on a **boat tour** (p132) and enjoying a barbecue picnic on a *motu*

**3** Working your tan on idyllic **Motu Fanfan** (p136)

**4** Huffing to the top of **Mt Pahia** (p133) to admire the sensational views

**5** Taking a **4WD tour** (p134) to spot rusty

WWII relics and ancient ceremonial sites

**6** Enjoying a romantic dinner with your partner in a gourmet **restaurant** (p138)

**7** Diving with manta rays at **Anau dive site** (p131)