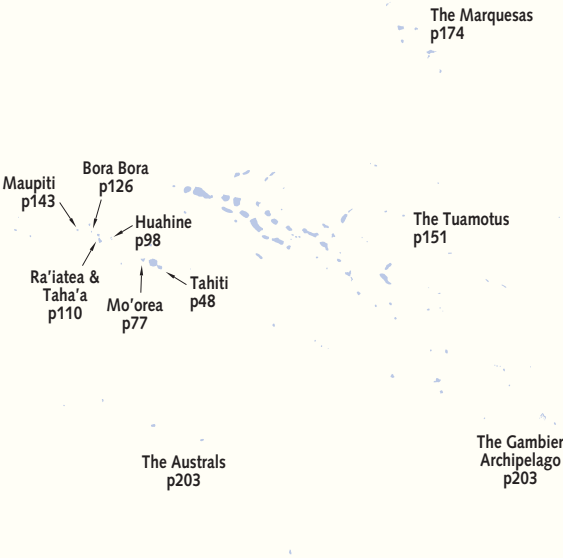


ON THE  
ROAD

YOUR COMPLETE DESTINATION GUIDE  
In-depth reviews, detailed listings  
and insider tips



SURVIVAL  
GUIDE

VITAL PRACTICAL INFORMATION TO  
HELP YOU HAVE A SMOOTH TRIP

Directory A-Z .....	236
Transport .....	246
Language .....	253
Index .....	265
Map Legend .....	271



THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

Celeste Brash  
Jean-Bernard Carillet

# PLAN YOUR TRIP

## YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT

Photos, itineraries, lists and suggestions  
to help you put together your perfect trip

Welcome to Tahiti & French Polynesia.....	2
Map.....	4
15 Top Experiences.....	6
Need to Know.....	14
If You Like.....	16
Month by Month.....	19
Itineraries.....	22
Which Island?.....	26
Diving.....	31
Travel with Children.....	39
Regions at a Glance.....	43

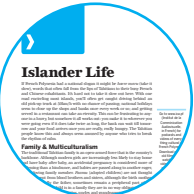


# UNDERSTAND TAHITI & FRENCH POLYNESIA

## GET MORE FROM YOUR TRIP

Learn about the big picture, so you  
can make sense of what you see

Tahiti & French Polynesia Today.....	214
History.....	216
Environment.....	226
Islander Life.....	229
French Polynesia in Popular Culture.....	233



➤ **Every listing is recommended by our authors, and their favourite places are listed first**

➤ **Look out for these icons:**



Our author's top recommendation



A green or sustainable option



No payment required

# On the Road

<b>TAHITI . . . . .</b>	<b>48</b>	Taipivai . . . . .	183
PAPE'ETE . . . . .	51	Hatiheu . . . . .	183
AROUND TAHITI NUI . . . . .	65	'UA HUKA . . . . .	185
West Coast . . . . .	65	'UA POU . . . . .	189
South Coast . . . . .	68	Hakahau . . . . .	189
East Coast . . . . .	71	Hakahetau . . . . .	191
TAHITI ITI . . . . .	73	Hakamaii . . . . .	191
		Hohoi . . . . .	192
<b>MO'OREA . . . . .</b>	<b>77</b>	HIVA OA . . . . .	192
		Atuona & Around . . . . .	193
<b>HUAHINE . . . . .</b>	<b>98</b>	Taaoa . . . . .	198
		Puamau . . . . .	199
<b>RA'IA TEA &amp; TAHA'A . . . . .</b>	<b>110</b>	Hanapaaaoa . . . . .	199
RA'IA TEA . . . . .	111	Hanaiaapa . . . . .	199
TAHA'A . . . . .	120	TAHUATA . . . . .	200
		FATU HIVA . . . . .	201
<b>BORA BORA . . . . .</b>	<b>126</b>		
<b>MAUPITI . . . . .</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>THE AUSTRALS &amp; THE GAMBIER ARCHIPELAGO . . . . .</b>	<b>203</b>
<b>THE TUAMOTUS . . . . .</b>	<b>151</b>	THE AUSTRALS . . . . .	204
RANGIROA . . . . .	153	Rurutu . . . . .	205
TIKEHAU . . . . .	162	Tubuai . . . . .	207
MATAIVA . . . . .	165	Raivavae . . . . .	208
FAKARAVA . . . . .	166	Rimatara . . . . .	209
MANIHU . . . . .	171	THE GAMBIER ARCHIPELAGO . . . . .	210
AHE . . . . .	173	Mangareva . . . . .	210
<b>THE MARQUESAS . . . . .</b>	<b>174</b>		
NUKU HIVA . . . . .	177		
Taiohae . . . . .	178		
Hakaui Valley . . . . .	182		
Toovii Plateau . . . . .	182		

# Tahiti & French Polynesia



# Top Experiences ›





## OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

## OUR WRITERS



### Celeste Brash

**Coordinating Author; Plan Your Trip, Understand and Survival Guide** Celeste first visited French Polynesia in 1991, fell in love with her now husband as well as Polynesian culture, and moved to the country in 1995. Her first five years were spent living off fish and coconuts on a pearl farm on an atoll sans plumbing, telephone and airstrip, and the next 10 years were spent on Tahiti. Now in Portland, Oregon, she often complains of the cold. Her award-winning travel stories have appeared in *Travelers' Tales* books, and her travel articles have appeared in publications such as the *Los Angeles Times* and *Islands* magazine. She's written over 30 Lonely Planet guides, but she considers the *Tahiti & French Polynesia* guide to be her pièce de résistance.

Read more about Celeste at:  
[lonelyplanet.com/members/CelesteBrash](http://lonelyplanet.com/members/CelesteBrash)



### Jean-Bernard Carillet

**Diving, On the Road** Paris-based journalist and photographer Jean-Bernard is a diehard Polynesia lover and diving instructor. So far, he has explored 28 islands in the five archipelagos. On this research gig he searched for the most idyllic *motu* (small islet), the best manta-ray encounters, the most thrilling lagoon tours, the tastiest *poisson cru* (raw fish in coconut milk) dish, the most romantic spots, the most enjoyable hikes and the best-value accommodation. His favourite

experiences included following the Hawaiki Nui canoe race by boat and attending the Marquesas Arts Festival on Nuku Hiva.

Jean-Bernard has contributed to many Lonely Planet titles and he writes for travel and dive magazines.

### Published by Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd

ABN 36 005 607 983

9th edition – Sep 2012

ISBN 978 174179 692 6

© Lonely Planet 2012 Photographs © as indicated 2012

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

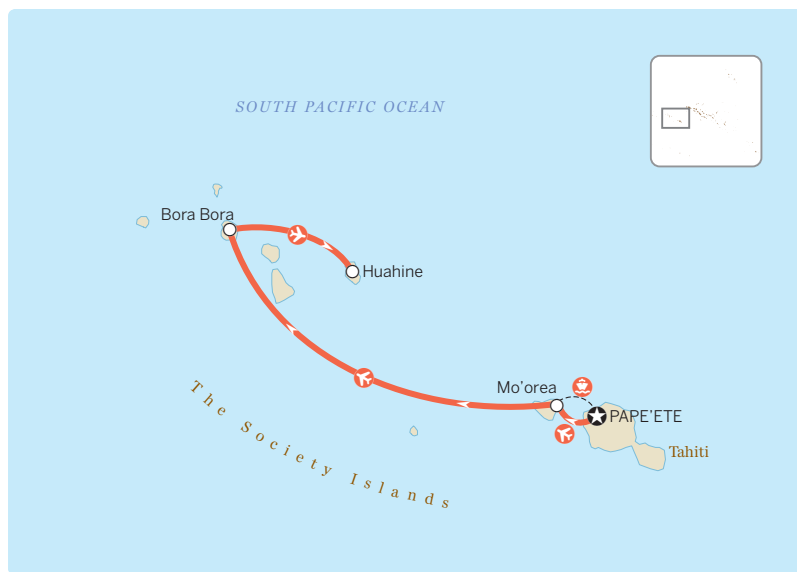
Printed in China

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be copied, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, except brief extracts for the purpose of review, and no part of this publication may be sold or hired, without the written permission of the publisher. Lonely Planet and the Lonely Planet logo are trademarks of Lonely Planet and are registered in the US Patent and Trademark Office and in other countries. Lonely Planet does not allow its name or logo to be appropriated by commercial establishments, such as retailers, restaurants or hotels. Please let us know of any misuses: [lonelyplanet.com/ip](http://lonelyplanet.com/ip).

Although the authors and Lonely Planet have taken all reasonable care in preparing this book, we make no warranty about the accuracy or completeness of its content and, to the maximum extent permitted, disclaim all liability arising from its use.

# itineraries

*Whether you've got six days or 60, these itineraries provide a starting point for the trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to [lonelyplanet.com/thorntree](http://lonelyplanet.com/thorntree) to chat with other travellers.*



One week

## A Glimpse of Paradise

From Pape'ete, fly or boat straight to **Mo'orea**, and stay for at least two nights. Mo'orea boasts soaring peaks, verdant hillsides and aqua waters, and is considered by many to be the most beautiful isle in the Society Islands. Cycle around magnificent Cook's Bay and Opunohu Bay, explore the island's archaeological sites or simply soak up the sun and splash around in the lagoon. From Mo'orea, fly to **Bora Bora**. Live it up for a night or more (depending on your budget) in an overwater bungalow or partake in a variety of water excursions on the vast, blue lagoon. Dine by candlelight, relax in a spa and look out for celebrities. From Bora Bora, it's a short flight to much more low-key **Huahine**, where you can end your holiday with two days of complete relaxation and a taste of authentic Polynesian culture. Go diving or snorkelling, take an island tour, and don't miss trying *ma'a Tahiti* (traditional-style food) at the restaurant Mauarii.





## Two weeks or more Polynesian Passage

Explore French Polynesia's myriad of welcoming cultures as well as its natural beauty. Start with a day or more on **Tahiti**, where you can take an island tour or hire a car to explore Marché de Pape'ete (Pape'ete Market) and the waterfalls, roadside caves and hidden beaches around the island. At night, catch a dance performance at one of the resorts or (if it's a Friday or Saturday) go out for a wild night in **Pape'ete**.

Next get on a plane to **Ra'iatea** to see the impressive Marae Taputapuātea, one of the most important spiritual sites of ancient Polynesia and hike up the Temehani Plateau in search of the *tiare apetahi*, one of the world's rarest flowers. Dive or snorkel the lagoon and be sure to take a picnic tour out to one of the island's fringing white-sand islets or kayak up Faaroa River, the only navigable river in French Polynesia. From here, take a short flight to **Bora Bora** to snorkel the lagoon, swoon at the island's square silhouette and live *la vida jet set* for a day or two. Then take a flight to **Rangiroa**, the largest coral atoll in the country. Dive with sharks, live in your swimsuit and quench your thirst with coconuts. Don't miss a tour of the immense lagoon to see pink-sand beaches and the surreally beautiful Lagon Bleu (Blue Lagoon), a lagoon within a lagoon. At sunset, watch dolphins frolic in Tiputa Pass.

Change cultures entirely when you fly on to the **Marquesas** (via Tahiti). Travelling here is like stepping back in time. You'll start in **Nuku Hiva**, where you can hike across windswept ridges into ancient volcanic craters before checking out the island's array of eerie archaeological sites, including Hikokua, Kamuihei and Tahakia. Follow Gauguin's trail to **Hiva Oa** to see the artist's tomb at Calvaire Cemetery and visit the Espace Culturel Paul Gauguin. Don't miss the giant stone *tiki* (sacred statues) at Iipona and several other ancient sites on the island. Alternatively, you could visit all of the Marquesas islands by taking the *Aranui* cargo ship for one of the world's most unique cruises focusing on culture and archaeology.



JEAN BERNARD CAHILL/GETTY IMAGES ©



PAUL KENNEDY/GETTY IMAGES ©

- » (above) Stilt bungalows over the waters of Bora Bora (p126)
- » (left) Cyclists on Mo'orea (p77)

© Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'