

Destination Tahiti & French Polynesia

Raise your hand, who wants to go to Tahiti? We thought so. With a name synonymous with paradise, French Polynesia has the quandary of having to live up to expectations fuelled by hundreds of years of hype and lifetimes of daydreams. Paul Gauguin painted brown-skinned beauties wearing little more than content expressions on their faces and flowers behind their ears; Herman Melville went AWOL in the Marquesas; the *Bounty* mutineers risked their lives to stay on the 'Island of Love'; and Marlon Brando, while portraying mutineer Fletcher Christian, fell in love with his Tahitian co-star and settled here. With its history of seduction and romance it's no wonder French Polynesia has become a favourite with honeymooners.

But is French Polynesia still the new Cythera, as it was dubbed by French explorer Louis-Antoine de Bougainville back in 1768? The islands are blessed with some of the most stunning scenery in the world – just as you've seen in the brochures – from surreal geometric peaks to endless blue lagoons. What visitors do complain about, however, is the lack of beaches. Don't expect sweeping swaths of sand; instead, you'll have to be content with little strips of white or black where you have just enough room to plop down before plunging into the lagoon. Besides resorts and hotels there is little in the way of traditional Polynesian architecture or even colonial structures – houses today are modern, practical, made from cheap materials and boxlike – but the people inside them still wear the same smiles that have been greeting foreigners for generations.

Though the French Polynesia of today isn't exactly the same scene that inspired Gauguin, the ubiquitous scent of gardenias, the warm damp breezes and ukulele riffs by starlight still make plenty of modern visitors want to move here and devote their lives to love and art. Gauguin also showed up poor, and today that's not recommended. While prices have hardly gone up over the last few years, this still isn't a budget destination and most visitors arrive on luxury itineraries to five-star hotels. Yet the budget-minded will be happy to find that daily expenses in French Polynesia can be considerably lower than in most major cities in Europe, especially if you can forgo that fancy French restaurant or take the bus or bike instead of renting a car. It'll still leave an impact on your credit card bill, but nothing that will take a lifetime to pay back.

While tourists are looking for spacious beaches and baulking at the price of their lunch, French Polynesians are griping about politics. The country is technically part of France but for the most part it's self-governing. Since 2004 the country's government has been at a standstill as the main political parties battle it out, call each other names, and try to woo members of the assembly to flip-flop the balance of power. While democratic elections decide how many assembly seats go to each party, once there the members can switch parties. When there is a fragile majority, which is always the case, one or two allegiance changes can overturn the entire government. From 2004 to 2008 this happened seven times. Since French Polynesia is socialist and modelled on the French system, nearly everything, from applications for low-income housing to taxation, goes through several layers of functionaries. When the government flips, everything stops and goes back to zero, making it impossible for folks to get things done. Add the requisite strikes, and

FAST FACTS

Population: 259,596

2007 GDP: 525,957
million CFP

Minimum wage per
month: 137,000 CFP

Unemployment rate:
11.7%

Number of islands: 118

Number of inhabited
islands: 76

Tiare flowers harvested
per day: 300,000

Tons of copra produced
per year: 9054

trying to do day-to-day things can become very frustrating (port strikes that block petrol are the worst). Rose, a local Tahitian fish-seller, sums up most people's attitude by saying: 'All I want is for our politicians to do their job and take care of us but that seems like a dream these days. I wish they'd just get it together and give our country some stability.' And Tahitians have the perfect word for how everyone is feeling about local politics: *fiu*, meaning sick and tired of it, worn out or just plain over it.

But Polynesians are happy people and don't like to whinge for long. When locals aren't talking politics they're usually talking about the season's events. Chinese New Year in late January or early February gets everyone discussing their Chinese horoscope and the year to come; in May everyone flocks to see surfing at the Billabong Pro in Teahupoo (p104) and the big beauty pageants (p44) around the islands; in July it's all about the Heiva (p48); and in October and November the Hawaiki Nui (p45) is the favourite topic of conversation. By December, Christmas and New Year's plans dominate the social scene. Between all this folks discuss how it's too hot or too rainy, gossip about the neighbours, and talk about how well their fruit trees are producing or what the fishing's been like. If you happen to pass by a group of Polynesians chatting together take notice of how much they laugh.

So is this paradise? If you're looking for clear-blue lagoons, laid-back people, fresh fish and a seriously slow pace of life, and have more than a few bucks in your pocket, it's hard to do much better than this; just remember, you're still in the modern world.

Getting Started

French Polynesia thrives on tourism, and the only thing difficult about travelling here is parting with the small fortune it's costs for a burger and Coke. That said, French Polynesia is a destination that benefits from planning. Start thinking about your trip around three to six months out; this will allow you enough time to scour the web for the best deals or book your dream honeymoon bungalow before someone else does. Definitely devote some serious hours to online research – from complete honeymoon packages to discounts on budget-oriented family guesthouses to internet-only deals on luxury resorts, there are thousands of sites out there offering everything French Polynesia related on sale. Once you arrive, an efficient and fast system of ferries, planes and taxis whisks you from destination to destination.

WHEN TO GO

French Polynesia is an outdoor destination, so the timing of your trip will probably be influenced by the weather. The dry winter period from May to October is the best time to go; the weather is cooler and there is much less rainfall during this time. Temperatures rise during the November to April summer rainy season when it's humid and cloudy. Three-quarters of the annual rainfall occurs during this period, generally in the form of brief, violent storms, although torrential rains lasting several days are not uncommon.

French Polynesia is south of the equator, but school holidays fall in line with those of the northern hemisphere. This means that the peak season is July and August; during this period it's no mean feat getting flights and accommodation. Christmas to early January, late February and early March, the Easter period, early May and early October are also quite busy times (which almost covers the entire year!). The peak July to August season coincides with the Heiva festival (p247), held throughout July, when the region comes to life. Unfortunately this is no secret, so plan ahead if July interests you.

Diving is popular year-round, and each season brings its share of discoveries (see the Diving chapter, p64). Surfing is also a year-round activity. If you are sailing, avoid the November to March tropical depressions – they can be depressing! Walking is best in the dry season, as some of the trails are simply impassable when it's wet.

COSTS & MONEY

French Polynesia is expensive, with travel costs on par with Europe or Australia. Flights alone tend to be a substantial cost, but once you arrive you may be shocked to find that even the cheapest meal, bought from a street vendor, will set you back around 1200 CFP. Backpackers who cook all their own meals and stay in the cheapest rooms possible can skimp by on 6000 to 8000 CFP per day depending on the island. Midrange-budget travellers, looking for more comfortable beds and wanting to enjoy a few restaurant meals and perhaps an organised excursion, can count on paying around 20,000 CFP per day. Top-end-budget visitors will find the sky is the limit when it comes to posh lodging and dining options and watery excursions. Over-water bungalows start at around US\$500 per night, and a stay on a private island can cost as much as US\$10,000. To score the best deals, try to book in advance. If you're travelling with kids, many places offer half-price discounts for children under the age of 12.

See Climate Charts (p246)
for more information.

DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

Imported goods are expensive in French Polynesia – and most goods are imported – so bring enough everyday essentials to last for your entire trip. The following are must-haves.

- Sunscreen: the sun can be devilishly scorching
- Raincoat: it can rain at any time, even during the supposedly dry season
- First-aid kit: be sure to pack the basics – aspirin, sticking plasters, antiseptic cream and anti-diarrhoea pills
- Insect repellent: French Polynesia doesn't have malaria, but the mosquitoes still bite hard and fast
- Plastic bags: keep your camera and other valuables protected from the elements
- International dive card: you won't want to miss French Polynesia's magnificent underwater worlds
- Snorkel, mask and flippers: the lagoons resemble personal aquariums, free to anyone carrying the right equipment
- Patience: island life moves slowly, so don't try to speed it up or you'll just be disappointed

Taxation is another bugbear here: a TVA (*taxe sur la valeur ajoutée*; value-added tax), which was introduced in 1998, currently adds 5% to your hotel bill, and that's not including the 5% government tax and the accommodation tax (*taxe de séjour*; daily tax) which top off the bill. We've included all taxes in our listed prices.

TRAVELLING RESPONSIBLY

Probably the best thing you can do to travel responsibly in Tahiti and French Polynesia is to stay at a locally run *pension* (guesthouse) rather than at a big resort. These small businesses have been hit the hardest with the drop in tourism and desperately need your business. Some travellers are afraid that family-run places won't offer the comforts they are looking for, but many up-scale *pensions* are stylish and plush, offering much better hospitality than you'll find at some multinational hotels. For recommended places see p30, or for booking ideas and packages go to <http://english.islandsadventures.com>.

When swimming remember not to walk on the coral (which are living organisms); for tips on responsible diving, see p71. To minimise the number of plastic bottles (for drinking water) you leave behind, consider bringing along a small water filter.

TRAVEL LITERATURE

Pulitzer-winning writer Tony Horwitz follows the voyages of Captain Cook and his beer-swilling friend Williamson in *Blue Latitudes: Boldly Going Where Captain Cook Has Gone Before* (2002). It's a frustrating, funny and insightful read.

The congenitally acerbic Paul Theroux was at his sourest when he visited *The Happy Isles of Oceania* (1992), describing Tahiti as 'a paradise of fruit trees, brown tits and kiddie porn'. Crossing the Pacific from Australia and New Zealand to Hawaii, he didn't find much of it very happy, but the insights are up to his usual high standards. His fellow passengers are prodded unmercifully with his sharpest pen and the beautiful, gloomy Marquesas are the perfect site for a Theroux visit. The French don't come out of it very well, but neither do the Polynesians, who are presented as eagerly embracing their own decline. This is a book to read after your trip. If you read it before

HOW MUCH?

Burger, fries and Coke at a *roulotte*: 1500 CFP

Dinner for two at a midrange restaurant: 6000 CFP

Simple bungalow with fan: 6000 to 10,000 CFP

Night in an over-the-water bungalow: 60,000 to 100,000 CFP

Five-island airpass: 26,500 CFP

TOP 10

OVER-THE-TOP LUXE RESORTS

If you're going to really splurge, French Polynesia just might be the best place in the world to do it. The following places are the best of the best.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Intercontinental Resort & Thalasso Spa Bora Bora (p160), Bora Bora | 6 Bora Bora Nui Resort & Spa (p160), Bora Bora |
| 2 Four Seasons Resort Bora Bora (p160), Bora Bora | 7 Le Méridien Bora Bora (p160), Bora Bora |
| 3 Le Taha'a Private Island & Spa (p148), Taha'a | 8 Te Tiare Beach Outrigger Resort (p132), Huahine |
| 4 Tikehau Pearl Beach Resort (p190), Tuamotus | 9 Legends Resort (p117), Mo'orea |
| 5 Saint Régis Resort (p160), Bora Bora | 10 Bora Bora Pearl Beach Resort (p160), Bora Bora |

BEST-VALUE ACCOMMODATION

The following are our top picks for good value – they are not necessarily the cheapest places, they simply have the best cost-to-worth ratio.

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Sofitel Maeva Beach (p90), Tahiti | 6 Maupiti Residence (p170), Maupiti |
| 2 Taaroa Lodge (p97), Tahiti | 7 Paahatea Nui (p205), Nuku Hiva |
| 3 Raiatea Lodge (p142), Ra'iatea | 8 Pension Ariiheevai (p192), Mataiva |
| 4 Pension Motu Iti (p116), Mo'orea | 9 Pension Meherio (p131), Huahine |
| 5 Novotel Bora Bora Beach Resort (p158), Bora Bora | 10 Pension Bounty (p182), Rangiroa |

READS

For a bit of armchair-travel, try the following titles.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 <i>Mutiny on the Bounty</i> by Charles Nordhoff and James Hall | 6 <i>Piracy in the Pacific</i> by Henri Jacquier |
| 2 <i>The Moon and Sixpence</i> by W Somerset Maugham | 7 <i>Blue Latitudes: Boldly Going Where Captain Cook Has Gone Before</i> by Tony Horwitz |
| 3 <i>Breadfruit</i> by Celestine Hitiura Vaite | 8 <i>Typee</i> by Herman Melville |
| 4 <i>To Live in Paradise</i> by René Roosevelt Denis | 9 <i>In the South Seas</i> by Robert Louis Stevenson |
| 5 <i>Tales of the South Pacific</i> by James Michener | 10 <i>Henderson's Spear</i> by Ronald Wright |

or during you'll look at French Polynesia more cynically and Polynesia isn't very welcoming to cynics.

Much more upbeat is Gavin Bell's award-winning *In Search of Tuscitala* (1994), which traces the Pacific wanderings of Robert Louis Stevenson. Like a number of other writers, Bell finds the Marquesas fascinating, beautiful and deeply depressing. 'How long has it been raining?' Bell asks the first Marquesan he meets. 'About one year,' comes the reply.

In *Kon-tiki: Across the Pacific by Raft* (1953), Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl recounts his epic voyage to try to prove his (now discounted) theory that Polynesia was populated by Incas from South America. It is a great adventure read.

White Savages in the South Seas (1995) by Mel Kernahan is a witty collection of experiences, accumulated by the author during years of studying and travelling as a solo woman in French Polynesia. It provides a candid look at the not-so-swanky lives of real people living in Tahiti.

For an unabashed look at the history of travel and sex, check out *Sultry Climates: Travel and Sex Since the Grand Tour* (2002) by Ian Littlewood, which pays particular attention to the attitude of many early explorers towards Tahitian women. It also examines the myth of Tahiti as a place linked with the lure of uninhibited sex.

Reneé Roosevelt Denis writes the fabulously adventurous story of her life and how she came to live on the island of Mo'orea (where she still lives) in her book *To Live in Paradise* (1996). The story takes us from Haiti to Los Angeles and finally to Tahiti and Mo'orea where we meet Marlon Brando and members of the Roosevelt family and partake in Club Med romances.

INTERNET RESOURCES

Easy Tahiti (www.easytahiti.com) Create custom packages with resorts or family *pensions*.

Haere Mai (www.haere-mai.pf) Lists small hotels and family *pensions*.

Island Adventures (<http://english.islandsadventures.com>) Air Tahiti's site with great-value air and lodging packages in small hotels and *pensions* throughout French Polynesia.

Lonely Planet (www.lonelyplanet.com) Provides summaries on travelling to most places on earth; includes the all-important Thorn Tree travel forum, where you can ask questions of travellers who've been to Tahiti recently.

Tahiti Explorer (www.tahitiexplorer.com) Discounts on lodging, customised honeymoon packages and destination descriptions.

Tahiti Nui Travel (www.tahiti-nui.com) Aimed at travel agents but packed with loads of useful information.

Tahiti Tourisme (www.tahiti-tourisme.com) Official Tahiti Tourism website, in English.

SPECIALTY WEBSITES

News: www.tahiti.presse.pf

Polynesian weddings: www.tahitianwedding.com

Pearls: www.perlesde.tahiti.com

Itineraries

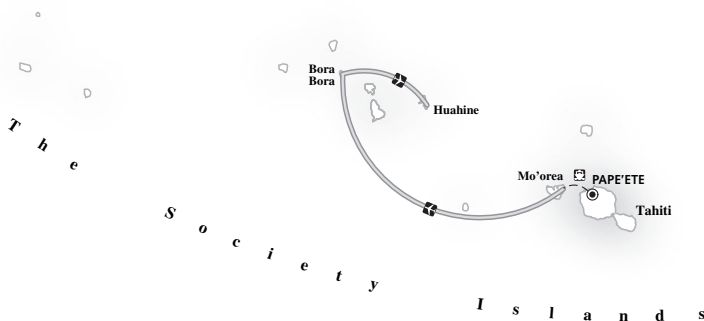
CLASSIC ROUTES

Experience some of the most beautiful islands in French Polynesia. Let your jaw drop at the majesty of Mo'orea, live it up on glitzy Bora Bora, then relax in the Polynesian calm of Huahine.

A GLIMPSE OF PARADISE

Six Days / Mo'orea, Bora Bora & Huahine

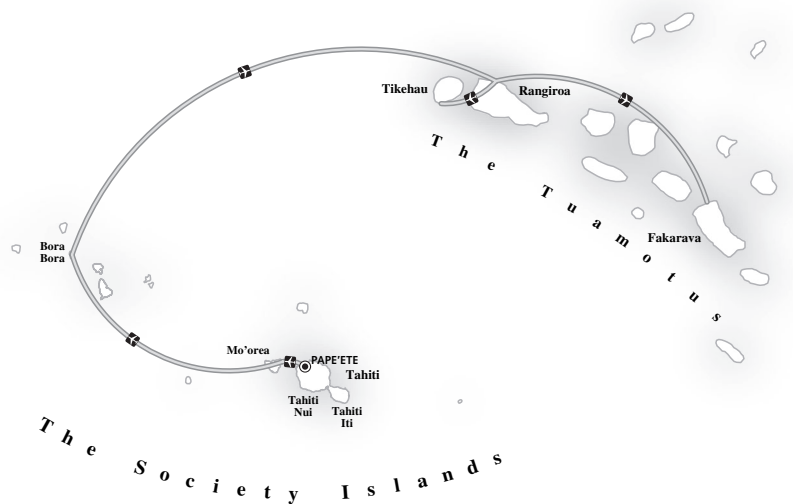
After arriving in Pape'ete, go straight to ultra-gorgeous **Mo'orea** (p106), where you'll want to stay for at least two nights. Boasting soaring peaks, verdant foliage and aqua waters, Mo'orea is considered by many to be the most beautiful isle in the Society Islands. Cycle around magnificent **Cook's Bay** (p109) and **Opunohu Bay** (p110), explore the island's **archaeological sites** (p112) or simply soak up the sun and splash around in the lagoon. From Mo'orea, fly to **Bora Bora** (p150). Live it up for a night or more (depending on your budget) in an over-water bungalow or partake in a variety of water excursions on the picture-perfect lagoon. From Bora Bora, it's a short flight to much more low-key **Huahine** (p123), 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 **Restaurant Maurii** (p133).



LAGOON SPECTACULAR **One Week to 10 Days / Tahiti to the Tuamotus**

French Polynesia is more of a lagoon destination than a beach destination, and the best lagoons are found in the Tuamotus group. With a week to 10 days, water-lovers can get a taste of the Society Islands before taking off to the more remote atolls. Start with a day on **Tahiti** (p75), where you can take an island tour or hire a car to explore **Marché de Pape'ete** (p84) 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** (p82). Next, spend at least two nights on **Mo'orea** (p106) and one on **Bora Bora** (p150) – see the previous itinerary for more details. From here it's time to explore the otherworldly atolls of the **Tuamotus** (p173). Head to **Rangiroa** (p176), the biggest and most developed of the archipelago, and spend at least two days exploring the atoll's immense, mostly untouched, lagoon, or diving and snorkelling in its sharky passes. Don't miss a chance to taste the only wine produced in the country at **Vin de Tahiti** (boxed text, p179) tasting room or take a tour of the bizarrely out-of-place vineyards. If you have time left after exploring Rangiroa, spend a few days checking out the white-sand beaches and outrageously fauna-rich pass of the prettiest atoll in the Tuamotus, **Tikehau** (p188). Alternatively you could visit the biosphere reserve of **Fakarava** (p185) with its two famous diving passes and pink-sand beaches.

Prepare to get wet. This itinerary gives you a taste of the high islands before leaving life as you know it for the otherworldly atolls. It's all about pink- and white-sand beaches and underwater action.



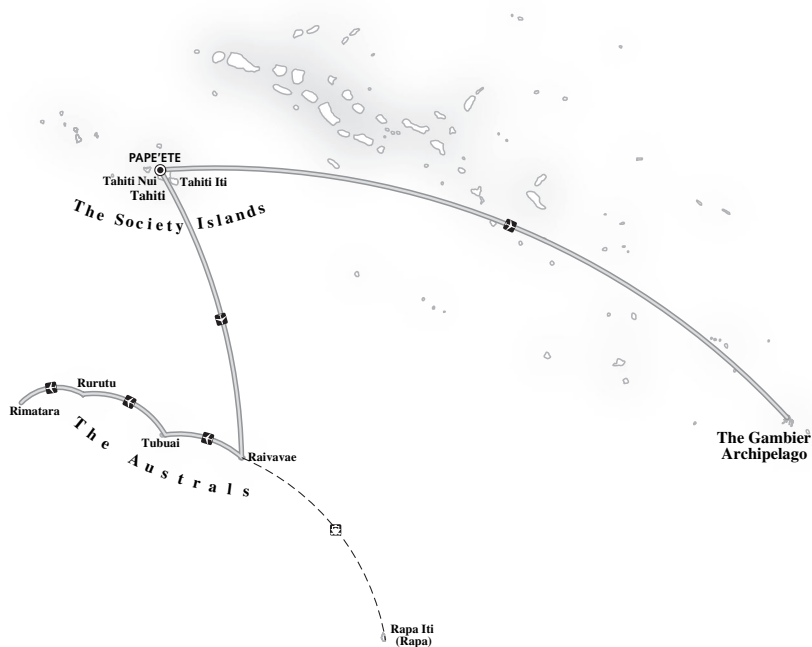
ROADS LESS TRAVELLED

ROOTS & RECLUSE

Two Weeks to Two Months / Tahiti, Gambier Archipelago & the Australs

So you really want to get away from it all? Visiting the Gambier and Austral Archipelagos gives you a glimpse into traditional Polynesian life and offers experiences of a lifetime. Go with an open mind and a big smile.

Anywhere outside the Society Islands is well off the beaten track, and French Polynesia offers some really 'out there' options where you can live out your Robinson Crusoe dreams or simply get away from modern life and into the heart of Polynesian culture. Head first to the **Gambier Archipelago** (p238), which boasts one of the bluest lagoons you'll ever see, hills perfect for long, lonely walks, intensely colourful pearls and a unique history involving the over-zealous Catholic missionary Honoré Laval. Flights only leave once to twice a week (see p257), so be prepared to be stuck here awhile and make friends with the locals. Next go to the **Australs** (p228), your first stop being idyllic **Raivavae** (p234). Here you'll eat *ma'a Tahiti* nonstop and feel like you know half the people on the island after a day or two. Hike up Mt Hiro, bike around the island and boat out to one of the rustic, paradisaical *motu* cabins (p235) where you'll be left alone, with meals ferried out to you three times a day. Next make a quick stop on **Tubuai** (p232) to visit the remarkable archaeological sites before going to **Rurutu** (p229) to ramble through limestone caves, ride horses through the abundantly fertile interior and dive with whales and dolphins with the local dive club. Those with more time should visit **Rimatara** (p232), where you'll search for the rare Rimatara lorikeet and experience a culture that's had very little European contact. Alternatively, catch the cargo ship to **Rapa Iti** (p236) – but you'll be stuck on the island for a month at least!



TAILORED TRIPS

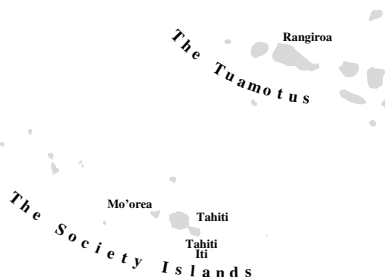
THE ULTIMATE HONEYMOON

While many people are happy to take a classic route for their honeymoon, such as our 'A Glimpse of Paradise' itinerary (p26), the ultimate honeymoon skips the main islands and brings you to our favourite spots for privacy and romance. Start at one of **Taha'a's** (p145) *motu* resorts, all which look out over the turquoise lagoon on one side and the awe-inspiring outline of Bora Bora on the other. Kayak, take an island tour to visit pearl farms and vanilla plantations, and lounge in your own private paradise. Next fly to **Maupiti** (p166), which is a more isolated and rustic version of Bora Bora. Digs are Polynesian-style bungalows on the beach – nothing fancy, but perfect for snuggling. From here you'll want to catch a flight to **Tikehau** (p188) to pamper yourselves at the secluded **Tikehau Pearl Beach Resort** (p190), or go more rustic and even more private on **Fakarava** (p185) at **Raimiti** (p188). Get the best tan you ever had, virtually live in the glass-clear lagoon, dive, snorkel, frolic, then dine on fabulous food and drink cocktails as the sun sets. Of course, you could pick just one of these islands and chill for a whole week.



TOO HOT FOR THE BEACH

Lounging around on a beach not your *maitai*? French Polynesia has plenty to offer the energetic crowd. Start off in **Tahiti** (p75) where your choices include canyoning through the **Hitiaa Lava Tubes** (p99) or hiking the wild coast of **Te Pari** (p104). Check out the **Billabong Pro Surf Competition** (p104) at Teahupoo in May, where you can watch the world's best surfers attack massive waves as you sit in a boat hovering in front of the tube. Try surfing for the first time on softer waves at **Papenoo** (p100) or if you're a seasoned surfer explore the breaks around the island. Next go to **Mo'orea** (p106) for **kite-surfing** (p113) lessons in the swimming-pool-blue lagoon and visit **Stingray World** (p115) to feed the stingrays by hand as you're circled by black-tip reef sharks. Take another day on the island to sign up for a **whale-watching tour** (p113) where, if you're lucky, you might get to swim with whales or dolphins. Fly then to **Rangiroa** (p69), one of the best-known dive areas in the world, home to lots of toothy sharks and powerfully strong currents. After all this, you'll *need* to lie on a beach!



ANCIENT POLYNESIAN MYSTERIES

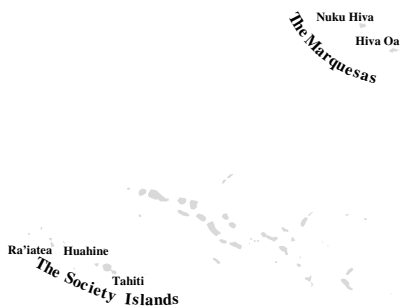
One of French Polynesia's unsung attributes is its array of ancient sites that are intensely mysterious and vastly under visited. Your trip will start in **Tahiti** (p75), where you'll get into a 4WD and head to **Relais de la Maroto** (p102) at the island's centre. Visit the *marae* (traditional temples) in the cool mountains and hike to waterfalls and jungle vistas. Next get on a plane to **Huahine** (p123) for one or two nights to visit the lovely **Maeva** (p126) archaeological area and enjoy the island's white-sand beaches. Then fly to **Ra'iatea** (p136) to see the impressive **Taputapuatea** (p138), one of the most important spiritual sites of ancient Polynesia. You'll change cultures entirely when you next go to the **Marquesas** (p199). Travelling here is like stepping back in time. Follow Gauguin's trail to **Hiva Oa** (p217) and don't miss the **lipona** (p222) archaeological site and several others on the island. Next go to **Nuku Hiva** (p201), where you can hike across windswept ridges into ancient volcanic craters before checking out the island's array of archaeological sites, including **Hikokua** (p208) and **Kamuihei and Tahakia** (p208).

Alternatively, you could visit all of the Marquesas Islands by taking the **Aranui** (p203) cargo/cruise ship for one of the world's most unique cruises focusing on culture and archaeology.

IT'S NOT EASY BEING GREEN

The word 'eco' is only just becoming a part of French Polynesia's tourism vocabulary. The best thing you can do if you want to make less of an impact is to stay at locally run family *pensions* (guesthouses), which create little waste, sometimes run on solar power (particularly in the Tuamotus) and are exceedingly better for the local economy than multinational-owned resorts. Don't assume that these places will be uncomfortable: many are stacked with amenities and are run like boutique bed and breakfasts. Start your trip at **La Maison de la Nature du Mou'a Roa** (p118) in Mo'orea, where you can learn about local flora, eat organic meals and enjoy fabulous hiking to lush vistas with views of knife-edged peaks. Next head to the Tuamotus where, if your budget is big enough, you can stay at **Kia Ora Sauvage** (p183) on Rangiroa or **Raimiti** (p188) on Fakarava – both small resorts were built with local materials and use minimal solar electricity. Those on a tighter budget should try **Relais Royal Tikehau** (p190) on Tikehau, which is run entirely on wind and solar power with

rubbish packed responsibly to Tahiti, or **Cocoperle Lodge** (p194) on Ahe, which runs on solar power and is part of the Reefwatch Foundation.



The Authors



CELESTE BRASH

Celeste first visited French Polynesia in 1991, fell in love with her now husband, as well as Polynesian culture, and moved to the country permanently in 1995. Her first five years were spent living off fish and coconuts on a pearl farm on a remote atoll sans plumbing, telephone or airstrip, but now she calls the more modern island of Tahiti home. Her award-winning travel stories have appeared in *Travelers' Tales* books and her travel articles have appeared in publications including *Los Angeles Times* and *Islands* magazine. She has written over a dozen Lonely Planet guides, but she considers the *Tahiti & French Polynesia* guide to be her *pièce de résistance*. For this edition Celeste wrote the front- and endmatter chapters (except Diving), Tahiti, Mo'orea, Huahine, Ra'iatea & Taha'a, the Tuamotus, the Australs and the Gambier Archipelago.



JEAN-BERNARD CARILLET

A Paris-based journalist and photographer, Jean-Bernard is a die-hard Polynesia lover, a diving instructor and a Polynesian dance aficionado. He has travelled the length and breadth of French Polynesia for nearly 15 years now – this assignment was his eighth trip to the *fenua*. So far, he has explored 28 islands in the five archipelagos, on land and at sea, from the heights of the Society Islands and the Marquesas to the depths of the Tuamotus' atolls, as well as the most remote corners of the Austral and Gambier Archipelagos.

Jean-Bernard has contributed to many Lonely Planet titles, both in French and in English, and has coordinated Lonely Planet's *Diving & Snorkeling Tahiti & French Polynesia*. For this edition Jean-Bernard wrote the Diving, Bora Bora, Maupiti and Marquesas chapters.

LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

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