

Maupiti

POP 1230

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Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Maupiti Résidence (p141)
- ➔ Maupiti Paradise (p141)
- ➔ Kuriri Village (p142)

Best Outdoor Activities

- ➔ Diving (p138)
- ➔ Snorkelling (p139)
- ➔ Kayaking (p140)
- ➔ Walking (p141)

Why Go?

Bora Bora's discreet little sister, Maupiti is one of the most ravishing islands in French Polynesia. There's a shimmering lagoon with every hue from lapis lazuli to turquoise, a perfect ring of islets girdled with sand bars, palm trees leaning over the shore and large coral gardens. Although this little charmer is no longer a secret, it still remains a hideaway where visitors come to absorb the lazy lifestyle. There's only one road and virtually no cars, just bikes; there are no showy resorts, just a smattering of family-run *pensions* where visitors can sample delicious local-style meals and genuinely interact with their hosts. And when you want to play, there's just the right amount of activities to keep you buzzing, from walking and lagoon excursions to diving and kayaking.

When to Go

- ➔ As with most Society Islands the drier season (June to October) is the most popular time to visit Maupiti.
- ➔ In July, the island is in full swing with the Heiva cultural festivities.
- ➔ Divers and snorkellers might like April to June and September to November best, when the water is calmest.
- ➔ The manta-ray season runs from April to September.

History

Dutch explorer Jacob Roggeveen is credited with the European 'discovery' of Maupiti in 1722, nearly 50 years before Wallis, Bougainville and Cook made their important landfalls on Tahiti. European missionaries were quick to follow, eventually succeeding in installing Protestantism as the major religion.

Bora Bora began to assert influence over Maupiti in the early 19th century; the power struggles continued throughout the century. French influence also reached the island dur-

ing this period; missionaries and local chiefs continued to wield the most power until after WWII, when the French took over.

Maupiti has changed little over the last century; fruit crops on the *motu* (islets) are still major sources of income for the islanders.

Sights

From the air, Maupiti resembles a miniature Bora Bora: the mountainous island mass is surrounded by a wide but shallow lagoon fringed with five *motu*. There's only



Maupiti Highlights

- 1 Exploring Maupiti's gin-clear lagoon while snorkelling with manta rays at **Manta Point** (p37).
- 2 Taking it real easy, basking lizardlike on heavenly **Tereia Beach** (p138).
- 3 Paddling a **kayak** (p140) across the azure lagoon.
- 4 Scaling **Mt Teurafaatiu** (p141) and feasting your eyes on 360-degree views of the translucent lagoon.
- 5 Reflecting on Maupiti's bizarre past while spotting the well-preserved **Haranae petroglyphs** (p138).
- 6 Finding your own paradise in a delightful *pension* on **Motu Tuanaï** (p138).