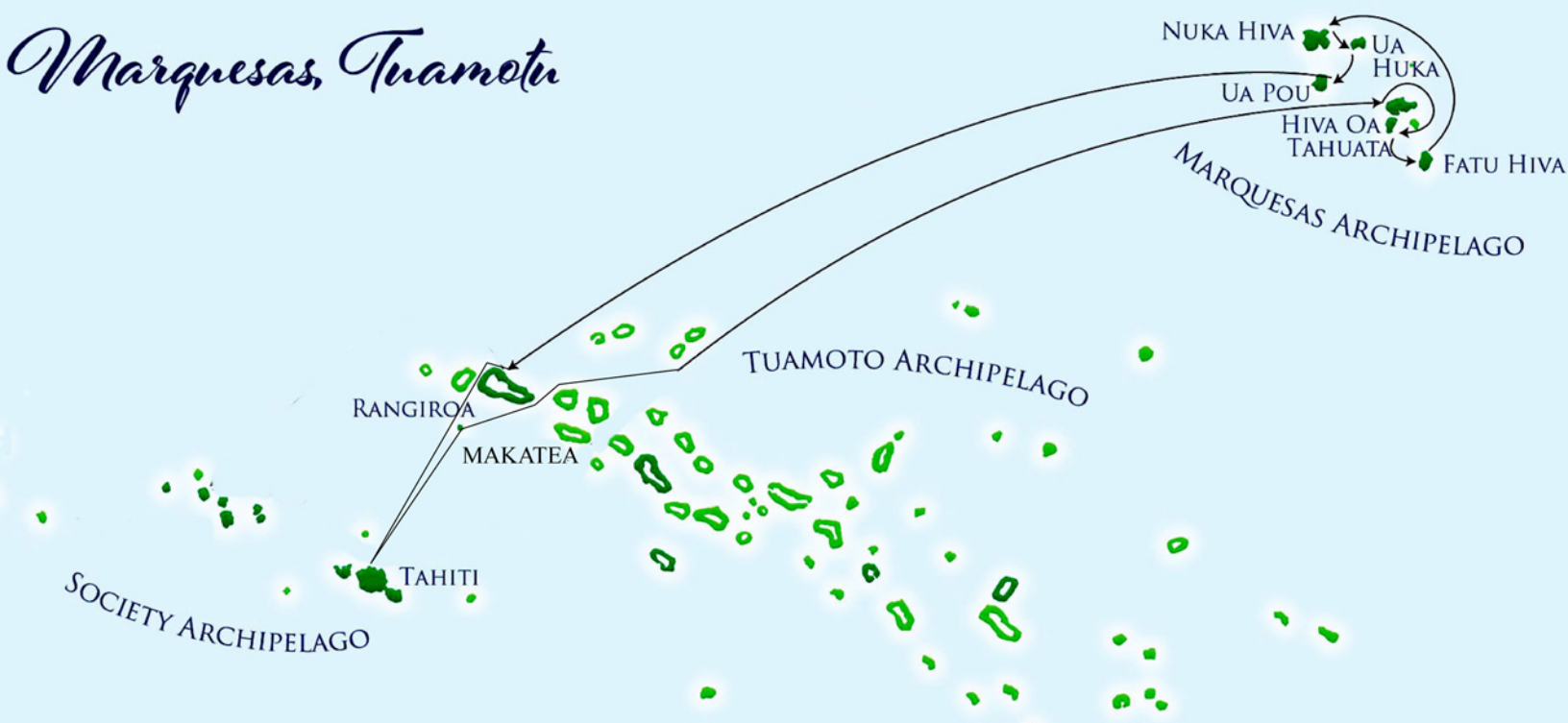




In Search of the Marquesas Islands.
“TE HENUA ENANA”, THE LAND OF MEN

Marquesas, Tuamotu



ARANUI CLASSIC MARQUESAS ITINERARIES

Day 1 Departure Tahiti (Papeete)
 Day 2 Makatea
 Day 3 At Sea
 Day 4 Ua Pou
 Day 5 Nuka Hiva
 Day 6 Ua Huka

Day 7 Hiva Oa – Kokuu Beach
 Day 8 Puamau – Tahuata
 Day 9 Fatu Hiva
 Day 10 At Sea
 Day 11 Rangiroa
 Day 12 Return Tahiti (Papeete)

Mythical and mystical. A land that has beckoned explorers and inspired writers, painters and artists. A rugged and breathtaking landscape of peaks, valleys, plateaus and cliffs. A nation of proud and formidable warriors long ago, distinct from Tahitians, with their own language and culture. A people where a simple smile will win them over. The Marquesas Islands is a world onto itself.

While Aranui Cruises is now sailing to other destinations in Eastern Polynesia, this remote archipelago, located nearly 1,000 miles northeast of Tahiti, has always been its primary focus. Over the last four decades, Aranui ships, as the principal transporter of freight to the Marquesas, has been a lifeline to the Islanders. The creation of Aranui Cruises in 1984 has provided access to all six inhabited islands to over 60,000 international passengers, contributing to the revitalization and discovery of the once dormant Marquesan culture.

According to Marquesan legend, the creation of the archipelago represents a house built by the god Oatea for his wife Atanua.



Hiva Oa The Ridge

Atuona, this island's principal village and the second largest in the Marquesas, was once the capital of this archipelago. Adjacent to the town, a tohua, a huge set of ceremonial platforms, has been perfectly restored, showing the places where chieftains and priests sat, and a narrow ditch which held prisoners for sacrifices.

A morning drive by 4-WD takes you to Puamau to visit the most important local archeological site for *tikis*, ancient, human-like religious sculptures, at Mea'e lipona. Our guides will show you through these mysterious ruins and share stories of these haunting statues and an ancient civilization. In Atuona, sweeping views of the harbor highlight a walk up the hill to the cemetery where Paul Gauguin and Jacques Brel are buried. Explore the Gauguin Museum, a replica of his "House of Pleasure", and the Brel Museum, which showcases his plane Jojo, which was often used for medical emergencies.



Ua Pou The Pillars

Legend refers to Ua Pou as the “pillars of the archipelago” and it is often called “The Cathedral Island”. These names become clear as the ship docks at Hakahau Bay surrounded by 12 basalt summits soaring as high as 3,745 feet. Every island has its own special ambience and Ua Pou’s is one of mystery and magic. You are sure to see familiar looking faces as many of our crew members are from here.

For the energetic early risers, you can hike up the hill to the Cross for breathtaking views of the valleys and village below. The artisans’ center is an easy walk and the offerings include works featuring the unique flower stone and a variety of carvings and children’s apparel. Before enjoying a Marquesan lunch, take in an excellent dance performance, including the Bird Dance, traditional to Ua Pou.

Photos, top to bottom, left to right: Page 8: Bird Dance, Ua Pou; Mea’e Iipona, Hiva Oa; Nuku Hiva; Church, Nuku Hiva. Page 9: Children playing, Ua Pou; Paul Gauguin’s Grave, Hiva Oa; Pig Dance, Nuku Hiva



A LAND OF INSPIRATION

For the last two centuries, the allure of the Marquesas has enticed numerous westerners to her shores. From writers and artists to explorers and adventurers, these islands have provided refuge and solace. Paul Gauguin spent the last years of his life in Hiva Oa, where he created some of his greatest masterpieces. Herman Melville and Robert Louis Stevenson produced novels inspired by their experiences in the islands. Belgian singer Jacques Brel wrote songs of the Marquesas during his time there.



Nuku Hiva The Beams & Rafters

This island is the administrative center of the Marquesas. The village of Taiohae stretches along the beach of a magnificent amphitheater created by the successive eruptions of three concentric volcanoes and dominated by towering cliffs streaked with waterfalls. All of the government services and residence, hospital, bank and schools are close by. A lovely handicraft center is located on the beach road.

Your adventure in Nuku Hiva will include a tour of the Cathedral Notre Dame, famed for its stonework and wood sculptures. In Hatiheu, you will visit the archaeological site known as Tohua Kamuihei, where public festivities once took place; the paepae, immense stone platforms on which houses were built; and huge boulders carved with enigmatic petroglyphs. Under a giant banyan tree, enjoy a performance of traditional songs and dances, including the “Pig Dance”, original to Nuku Hiva. A traditional “Umu”, a Marquesan specialty, where food is cooked in an underground oven, will be served for lunch.



Fatu Hiva The Roof

The most lush and remote in the archipelago, Fatu Hiva is also a center of Marquesan crafts. In the village of Omoa, women will demonstrate the making of tapa by hammering mulberry, banyan or breadfruit bark on a log. It will be dried and then painted with ancient traditional designs. Another demonstration will show the making of the *kumuhei*, an herbal bundle unique to this island used by the local women to perfume their hair. The adjacent craft center offers tapa, carvings, hand-dyed pareo and some of the finest monoi coconut oil.

Following the visit of the village, athletic passengers may choose to hike from Omoa to Hanavave, a 10 mile trek offering spectacular views of towering cliffs. A picnic lunch will be served at the summit. Non-hikers will sail on the Aranui to Hanavave on the Bay of Virgins, considered one of the most beautiful bays in the world. Go ashore for a visit of the village and to welcome the hikers.



Ua Huka The Gods Reserve

This island, where the Marquesas' first airstrip was built in 1972, is largely arid and home to many wild horses, goats and pigs. It is also the least inhabited in the Marquesas and is a refuge for two endemic birds: the *pati'oti'o* and the *pihiti*, only found here. In the early morning, the Aranui will execute a point-to-point 180-degree turn in the narrow mouth of Vaipae's Invisible Bay. With only feet to spare on either side, it is a skillful operation by the captain and the crew not to be missed.

From the dock, travel by 4-WD to the village of Hane. Along the way, you will stop to explore the Botanical Garden, the cultural center Te Tumu, featuring a small museum with exquisite replicas of Marquesan artifacts, and a petroglyph museum and local woodcarvers' studios in the fishing village of Hokatu. Look for the unusual carved black and white coconuts. In Hane, where a Marquesan lunch will be served, visit the Marine Museum beforehand and in the afternoon, a hike to view red tuff tikis overlooking the bay, is available.



Tahuata A Ray of Light

Though the smallest of the inhabited Marquesan islands, it is historically one of the richest. Tahuata has experienced it all — as the first island in the archipelago to be discovered by Spanish explorers, who opened fire on a crowd of curious islanders, killing about 200, in 1595 to the arrival of missionaries in 1797 to the first French settlement in the Marquesas in 1842. The local men, and many of the women here carve exquisite tikis, sea creatures, bracelets, necklaces and more from horse and cow bone, fossilized bone, tusks and pink helmet shell.

The impressive church, built by the Vatican, and decorated with beautiful carvings and a stained glass window featuring the Marquesan cross, is well worth the visit. After lunch on board, enjoy a lazy afternoon on a beautiful white sand beach or take a refreshing dip in the Pacific Ocean.



THE ART OF TATTOO

The modern word tattoo originates from “tatau” in early Polynesian history. Practiced throughout all the island groups, the Marquesan designs represent gods, mythology and nature. In tradition, tattooing began shortly after birth and continued to mark rites of passage. A Marquesan man’s status could be read from his tattoos. Men were generally heavily covered, with women tattooed on the hands, arms, lower body and behind the ear. Banned by the French from 1858 until 1985, it is flourishing and influencing the art worldwide.



Tattooed Man from Nuka Hiva, Wilhelm Gottlieb Tilesius von Tilenau, in Krusenstern, A. J. von, Voyage Round the World in the years 1803, 1804, 1805, & 1806 . . . Richard Belgrave Hoppner (trans.), J. Murray, 1813, Atlas: plate 10.

Photos, top to bottom, left to right: Page 10: Kumuhei, Fatu Hiva; Church, Tahuata; Bone and wood carvings, Tahuata; Vaipae Bay, Ua Huka. Page 11: The Bay of Virgins, Fatu Hiva; Botanical Garden, Ua Huka.

Fakarava

Designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve for the preservation of rare species and the second largest atoll in French Polynesia, Fakarava has remained virtually untouched. From its stunning lagoon and glistening white sand beaches to its rich ecosystem, it is home to unique birds, plants and marine life.

You will have time to discover the small village of Rotoava, the church, built of coral and the local arts and crafts. Bicycle rentals are available if you wish to venture to the old lighthouse at the airport or enjoy a day of relaxation, sun and sand, swimming and snorkeling among colorful tropical fish.



Rangiroa

The largest atoll in French Polynesia, Rangiroa or "huge sky" is the most visited of the Tuamotu.

The endless lagoon attracts divers to snorkel, scuba or shoot the pass surrounded by fish of every size, color and shape. Rangiroa is famous for its majestic Manta rays. It is also home to stunning pearls in all shades and the local artisans are known for their fine shell jewelry.

While in Rangiroa, you will have the opportunity to enjoy the magnificent lagoon on a glass bottom boat tour; swimming, snorkeling or diving, or visit one of the finest pearl farms in the Tuamotu to learn about these rare gems and see how they are grown.

Bora Bora

Best known of the Society Islands, Bora Bora showcases a stunning lagoon in myriad shades of blues and greens and the striking Mt. Otemanu, which inspired James Michener and everyone who visits the island. Surrounded by *motus* (small islets), the ring of white beaches fringed by coconut trees is enchanting. An advanced base during World War II, a tour of the island visits the cannon emplacements.

In this picture perfect island paradise, you will enjoy a day at the beach on a private motu while the crew prepares another delicious picnic lunch featuring Tahitian specialties. In the afternoon, you will have time at your leisure. You may also choose from a variety of optional excursions at an additional cost, such as a circle island tour by boat or bus, or one of the most popular, shark and ray feeding.



Photos, top to bottom, left to right: Page 12: Light house, Fakarava; Beach and lagoon, Rangiroa; Island of Bora Bora.

Optional Excursions

At every port, guests can enjoy an array of included excursions. For a bit more adventure, there are plenty of optional activities from which to choose.

The following can be booked on board and at an additional cost.

FISHING

Due to its remoteness and isolation in the South Pacific and with an abundance of marine life, the Marquesas is a fisherman's paradise. *Mokai Nui 2*, a four-person boat, offers deep sea fishing outings with a seasoned crew at four different ports. Tuna, wahoo fish and bonita are some of the types of fish that can be found here. Experience the thrill of catching your dinner, which our chef will turn into a delicious dish for you and your friends.

HORSEBACK RIDING

On Ua Huka, where wild horses, originally introduced from Chile in the 1850s, outnumber the population, discovering the island on horseback is a perfect way to roam wild and free just like the locals.

DIVING

Some of the best diving in world can be found in French Polynesia. The three distinct topographies offer a different experience each time, with diving available on five islands. While Fakarava, Rangiroa and Hiva Oa is available to advanced certified divers only, all levels are welcome in Tahuata and Bora Bora. From sharks, manta rays, dolphins, turtles or whales, depending on the island and time of year, to an abundance of colorful tropical fish and coral, this paradise is a diver's playground.

GLASS BOTTOM BOAT

For those who don't dive or snorkel, enjoy the extraordinary underwater world of Rangiroa's blue lagoon without getting wet on a glass bottom boat tour. Guests will discover the colorful coral and tropical fish that call the atoll home with the chance of a cameo from a shark or turtle.

RAY & SHARK FEED

During the quintessential Bora Bora lagoon excursion guests have the chance to get up close and personal with the island's abundant marine creatures. Guests can snorkel with colorful reef fish in a coral garden, stand hip-high in Bora Bora's famed blue lagoon while sting rays play in the surrounding water and dive into the azure ocean with friendly reef or lemon sharks.



ISLAND TOUR BY TRUCK

To take in the dazzling shades of Bora Bora's lagoon from land, guests board a truck that takes them around the picturesque island for the chance to enjoy panoramic views, visit beautiful Matira Beach, grab a refreshment at the beachfront bar and learn about arts and crafts during a visit to a handicraft center, which also offers the chance to buy some souvenirs.

ISLAND TOUR BY CANOE

For the chance to see the entire island of Bora Bora, guests board a motorized outrigger canoe for a few hours, stopping to snorkel with tropical fish in a coral garden, swim with sharks, taste local fruits on a motu and get up close and personal with sting rays in the lagoon, before disembarking on Aranui's private island — Motu Tapu — to join fellow guests for a complimentary picnic lunch. The Captain offers commentary on Bora Bora's culture, legends, history and geography in between stops.

