



French Polynesia Traveler's Guide

Questions & Answers

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During the journey

How long is the flight from the United-States to Tahiti?

The flight duration from the United States to Tahiti varies depending on your departure city and whether the flight is direct or has layovers. For a direct flight from Los Angeles (LAX) or San Francisco (SFO) the duration is about 8 hours.

How long before takeoff do you need to be at the airport for a domestic flight?

You should go one hour before your domestic flight to check in your luggage and wait for boarding.

Can I bring my own bottles of alcohol?

Globally you can, but the restrictions can vary according to the airlines.

On **AIR FRANCE**, **AIR TAHITI NUI**, **AIR TAHITI**, **AIR MOANA**, you cannot bring bottles of alcohol in your carry-on luggage but each passenger can take up to 5L of alcohol and place it in his checked luggage. Home-made alcoholic beverages and beverages containing more than 70% alcohol are prohibited. Alcoholic beverages containing 24% alcohol or less are not subject to any restrictions.

Can I buy liquor at the arrival terminal?

You can buy some liquor at your arrival in French Polynesia at the duty-free shop located in the arrival terminal of Tahiti-Faa'a. The duty free is always open for the arrival of international flights.

I am traveling light, do I need to bring my snorkeling gear?

You don't necessarily need to bring your fins. If you plan to go on a snorkeling excursion the companies organizing the tours lend the material. The same goes for diving, diving center gives you the fins. If you plan on doing some snorkel on your own, depending on the hotel you're staying some offer to rent fins or it can even be included in your reservation. However, if you're staying at smaller accommodation like Airbnb or some guesthouses you may want to bring your own snorkeling gear.





Is there a gift shop at the Bora Bora airport?

Yes, there is one. There is a gift at most airports of the islands of Tahiti.

What are the luggage policies on the domestic airlines?

AIR TAHITI:

Every passenger can bring a cabin luggage of 5kg for free. This luggage must respect these dimensions: 55 x 35 x 25cm. You can also bring a checked-in luggage for free, its dimension (height + width + length) must be inferior to 158cm. If you are flying on the Natira'a Tumu network (to Huahine, Raiatea, Bora Bora, Maupiti, Rangiroa, Tikehau, Fakarava, Tubuai, Rurutu, Nuku Hiva, Hiva Oa) then your luggage should not weight more than 1 kg. If you're travelling on the Natira'a Turu Network (to Ravava, Rimatara, Ahe, Kauehi, Manihi, Mataiva, Gambier, Hao, Makemo, Ua Pou, Ua Huka) then your checked-in luggage shouldn't weight more than 10 kg.

You can bring liquids in bottles of 100 ml maximum. All liquids must be placed in transparent containers. Each passenger can bring a maximum quantity of liquids, all bottles should fit into a one-liter plastic bag (20 x 20 cm).

AIR MOANA:

Each passenger can carry a cabin luggage of 5 kg and an accessory for free. The luggage must respect those dimensions: 55 x 35 x 25cm. You can take as much checked baggage as you like, as long as you comply with the maximum weight of your baggage allowance. The maximum weight allowed will depend on the fare chosen when purchasing the passenger ticket. Your checked baggage must respect these dimensions: 90 x 70 x 50 cm. Infants under two years old benefit from a baggage allowance of 5 kg in the hold.

Can I bring pre-packed snack in my suitcase?

On **Air France** you can bring snacks in your carry-on baggage without restriction. Just note that pasty substances (including chocolates) must follow the same restriction as liquids: all liquids must be stored in 100 ml containers and placed in transparent plastic bags.

On **Frenchbee** solid food is allowed without any restriction, liquids must be carried in 100ml containers and all stored in a plastic transparent bag. Liquid food (like soup) is not allowed in cabin, opaque containers over 100ml (tin can) are not allowed.





On **Air Tahiti Nui** you can also bring your snacks. And regarding liquids and pasty substances, everything must be stored in 100 ml containers and the containers must be placed in a one-liter transparent plastic bag maximum.

If you can bring your own snack, please note that some companies will give you snacks on board as included in your ticket.

Visa regulation



Do I need a visa as an American traveler?

As an American you don't need a visa to go to French Polynesia. You only need a passport and you'll be able to stay up to 90 days.

I have a green card, does that mean I don't need a visa to come to French Polynesia?

Having a green card does not mean that the same regulations apply. You must refer to your nationality of origin to find out which entry procedures apply to you, as it all depends on your citizenship.



Safety information

What regulations apply to drones in Tahiti? Can you fly them anywhere?

Generally speaking, you can use your drone in French Polynesia however, you'll need an authorization from the local aviation authority (SEAC Polynésie) for flying in restricted areas. Some private areas (like resorts) are stricter, in Bora Bora you can't fly your drone on most of the island (except over the sea) and most resorts require permission if you plan to fly over them.





Are there any required vaccines to go to Tahiti?

No there are no required vaccines.

Is Tahiti safe for tourists? What precautions should I take?

Yes, Tahiti is generally safe. The crime rate is low, but petty theft can occur like anywhere in the world, so keep valuables secure and use hotel safes. When swimming or snorkeling, be cautious of strong currents and stick to designated areas. Use insect repellent to avoid mosquito bites, and respect local customs. Overall, basic precautions will help ensure a safe and enjoyable trip.

Are there any dangerous animals or insects to be aware of?

Tahiti has very few dangerous animals or insects, but there are a few to be aware of:

Mosquitoes: Mosquitoes can carry diseases like dengue fever, though outbreaks are rare. It's wise to use insect repellent, especially in the evenings. (common)

Stonefish: These venomous fish can be found in shallow waters and are well-camouflaged on the ocean floor. Wear water shoes when walking in the ocean to avoid stepping on one. (rare)

Jellyfish: Jellyfish stings are uncommon but possible. Pay attention to any warnings about jellyfish in the area. (rare)

Overall, the risks are low, but taking simple precautions can help you stay safe.



During your vacation

Do the resorts offer rafts and ropes for overwater bungalows?

No they don't, some people bring their own but it takes some storage. Often at the resort you can negotiate with people who are leaving to get the rafts they are leaving behind. Some people write posts on Facebook groups to offer their floaties. If you want to attach your raft to your overwater bungalow any floating rope will do, otherwise, many people are using paracord that they bought before coming.





Are day passes available at hotels in Bora bora, Tahiti and Moorea?

Several resorts offer day passes, here's a list with some of them. We advise you to book your day pass in advance as the resorts open a limited number of place. This service may not be available during peak season.

Tahiti:

- Day pass at the **Royal Tahitien Resort** for 46\$ (Monday to Friday) or 55\$ (weekends): access to the pool from 10 am to 5 pm, 27\$ credit at the main restaurant.
- Day pass at the **Intercontinental Tahiti Resort** for 87\$ (Monday to Thursday) or 102\$ (Friday and weekends): access to the Lotus pool from 10 am to 5 pm, main course and dessert at the Lotus restaurant included.
- Day pass at the **Te Moana Tahiti Resort** for 72\$: access to the pool and motu, a lunch at the Taapuna restaurant including one main course and a coffee or ice cream, two hours of kayak or paddle rental.
- Wellness day pass at the **Te Moana Tahiti Resort** for 136\$: access to the pool and motu, a lunch at the Taapuna restaurant including one main course and a coffee or ice cream, two hours of kayak or paddle rental, a 30 minutes Polynesian massage.

Moorea:

- The **Manava Moorea Resort** offers three different day passes:
 - Day pass for 78\$: access to the swimming-pool, access to the beach and kayaks, a two-courses lunch, a welcome cocktail.
 - Spa day pass for 118\$: access to the swimming-pool, access to the beach and kayaks, a 30 minutes massage with an access to the Manea Spa's facilities for another 30 minutes, a two-courses lunch.
 - E-Paddle day pass for 118\$: a welcome cocktail, access to the beach and to the swimming-pool, access to kayaks and paddles, a one-hour tour on E-Paddle with E Board Miti Moorea, a two-courses lunch.
- Day pass at the **Sofitel Moorea Kia Ora Beach Resort** for 62\$: access to the beach and its equipments, access to the beach bar, access to the swimming-pool, a two-courses lunch at Vue Bar.





Bora Bora:

- **Conrad Bora Bora Nui** day pass for 183\$: access to the swimming-pool, beach, lunch at Tamure Restaurant (starter / main course or main course / dessert), 10% off spa treatments.
- **Le Bora Bora by Pearl Resort** offers three different day passes:
 - The Mahana Day Pass for 196\$ including the transfer from Chancelade to the Resort (departure is at 9.45 a.m. and return at 4.30 p.m), an access to the swimming-pool from 10.30 am to 4.00pm), a two-courses meal with a soft drink at the Miki Miki, a cocktail or mocktail at the Manuia Bar.
 - The Avatea Evening Pass for 200\$ xpf including the transfer from Chancelade to the Resort (departure is at 5.30 pm. and return at 10 p.m.), a three-courses dinner with a soft drink at the Miki Miki or the Otemanu, a cocktail or mocktail at the Manuia Bar or the Uaina Bar.
 - The Tamaru Pass for 236\$ xpf including the transfer from Chancelade to the Resort (departure is at 8.30 a.m. and return at 4.30 p.m), an access to the swimming-pool from 8.30 am to 4.00 pm), a breakfast at the Otemanu (from 8.30 am to 10 am), a two-courses meal with a soft drink at the Miki Miki, a cocktail or mocktail at the Manuia Bar.
- The **Intercontinental Bora Bora Le Moana Resort** offers a day pass for 69\$ xpf including an access to the resort's beach and a sunbed, a two-courses lunch (no access to the swimming-pool or the snorkeling equipment).
- The **Intercontinental Bora Bora Resort and Thalasso Spa** offers two different passes:
 - A half-day pass for 170\$ including a transfer from the main island to the resort (departure is at 11.45 am and return at 5.00 pm), a two-courses lunch at the Sands restaurant, an access to the swimming pool, an access to the resort's beach and their kayaks and paddles.
 - A full-day pass for 218\$ including the transfer from the main island to the resort (departure is at 8.45 am and return at 5.00 pm), a breakfast at the hotel buffet, a two-courses lunch at the Sands restaurant, an access to the swimming pool, an access to the resort's beach and their kayaks, paddles, snorkeling gears.
- The **St Regis Bora Bora Resort** day pass for 131\$: access to the beach, to the lagoonarium, to the main-pool and to non-motorized water activities, a two-course lunch at the Aparima bar.





Where can I buy quality black pearls?

The best place to buy some high-quality black pearls is Tahiti Pearl Market, a fine jeweler's house dating back to 1994, offering different types of jewelry with black pearls. You can find their stores in Tahiti, Bora Bora and Taha'a.

Otherwise, if you wish to pick your own pearls and create your jewel from loose pearls you can go upstairs at the Papeete market find some stores like the Mihiarii Pearls store and create your own.

What is the average cost of pearls in Tahiti?

Prices vary widely, depending on the quality of the pearls. The rounder and more "perfect" the pearl, the more expensive it will be. Similarly, a jewel with more pearls is bound to be more expensive. You can start to find jewels at over 100 euros, bracelets often cost around 300 euros but this can go up to several thousands for necklaces made entirely of pearls. At the Papeete market, you'll find pearl jewelry that isn't that high quality, but at attractive prices.

Are bathroom amenities and sunblock available everywhere for travelers with a carry-on only?

If you're travelling with a carry-on only and are staying at some international resorts you won't need to bring much shampoo, soap or sunscreen. All resorts offer well-equipped rooms with a hairdryer, body wash and shampoo, you'll find everything you need at the resort. Regarding sunscreen, in most hotels you can find sunscreen distributors next to the swimming-pool. However, if you're staying in a guesthouse, an Airbnb or another accommodation type you will not always find sunscreen or bathroom amenities and you may want to bring your own.

Should I rent a car for the day while in Tahiti?

Yes, we would encourage you to rent a car, Tahiti is quite a big island and a car will allow you to better explore it. The only other practical way to move around would be to use taxis. There are many things to do in a day in Tahiti, you could go see Teahupoo, go to roam, find a "roulotte" (food truck) where to eat local food, a car will allow you to explore the island. You can rent cars at the airport but we would recommend to book it in advance.





When is it best to visit Papeete market?

Papeete market is open Monday to Friday from 5.30 a.m. to 4 p.m., from 5.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday and from 4.30 a.m. to 10 a.m. on Sunday. You will always find some souvenirs to buy and cultural products (pareu, shell necklace...). But to enjoy the most authentic atmosphere, you should go at the same time as the locals, around 5am on Sundays. And it is also the best time if you wish to try some local food and breakfast like the “Pua roti”, a kind of lacquered pork.

Should I book tours in advance?

Yes, you should, especially if you're planning to travel between June and October. Have a look at www.tahiti-excursions.com to give you ideas.

Where can I find nice restaurants in Tahiti, Moorea and Bora Bora?

Tahiti:

- The “Blue Banana” and “La Plage” are two seaside restaurants where you can enjoy local dishes while admiring the view of Moorea.
- The “Chez Dominique” roulotte on the “Place Vaiete” offers a simple and local meal.
- The “Meherio” on the port of Papeete is a great place to eat or have a drink.
- The “Maru Maru” offers a unique dining experience in Tahiti, featuring artisanal cuisine crafted with fresh, high-quality ingredients and a homemade touch.

Moorea:

- The “Lézard jaune” a lounge restaurant with a friendly, modern atmosphere, where you can sample a wide range of local dishes cooked on a griddle.
- The “Taoahere Beach House Snack” where you can enjoy local food and fresh fish while admiring the sharks from the terrace.
- The “Snack Mahana”, a very casual restaurant facing the sea and with hearty dishes. (first come, first served)
- The “Holy Steak House” is great if you're looking for some meat with panoramic view.
- The « Tipaniers Restaurant » a well-known local restaurant offering excellent fish dishes in a charming Polynesian setting by the lagoon. (lunch only)





Bora Bora:

- The “Saint James Bora Bora ” is a nice restaurant offering a great view on the lagoon.
- The “Villa Mahana” is a gastronomic restaurant with an intimate atmosphere.
- The « Bloody Mary’s » is known as a more casual restaurant with many seafood dishes. You will enjoy feet in the sand !
- If you wish for a more authentic experience, go to “Snack Matira”, set on Matira beach the place offers traditional Polynesian dishes like raw fish in coconut milk.

Do I need cash or does my credit card work?

Credit cards work fine, you can use it at the store, you’d only need cash for smaller businesses like foodtrucks or at the markets. At the different resorts you can pay everything with your credit card (Visa, Mastercard, American Express). Therefore, you won’t need so much change.

Does every taxi at the airport have meters and charge the same rate? Is it easy to find a taxi at the airport?

Yes, all taxis have a meter and all charge the same. At the airport you’ll easily find a cab. There’s a line waiting just outside the international terminal including minivans if you’re a group.

What is the best time of the year to visit the islands of Tahiti?

It depends on what you’re looking for. The most popular time to visit Tahiti and its islands is during the dry season, which runs from April to October. This period offers the most pleasant weather, with less humidity, cooler temperatures, and minimal rainfall. Daytime temperatures typically range between 77°F to 84°F. July and August are particularly popular due to the excellent weather and the Heiva Festival, which celebrates Tahitian culture with traditional dance, music, and sports. However, these months can be busier and more expensive due to higher tourist demand.

If you're looking for fewer crowds and lower prices, consider visiting in the shoulder months of April and November. The weather is still quite favorable, though you may experience occasional showers. For those visiting the Tuamotu, the rainfall is usually minimal as there are no peaks to trap the clouds.





What are the usual shop operating hours?

From Monday to Friday, shops are usually open in the morning between 8 AM to noon and in the afternoon between 1:30 PM and 5:00 PM. On Saturday they're mostly open in the morning from 7:30 AM to noon, some can be open in the afternoon. On Sunday most shops are closed.

Do Google drive or waze work in Tahiti?

You can use waze but google maps works best.

What are the best reef safe sunscreens?

It's difficult to know exactly which components affect the reef, but the Sun Bum sunscreen is one of the most reef friendly sunscreen. All their products meet the requirements of the Hawaii Act 104 which bans the sale and distribution of sunscreen with products known to be harmful to coral (Oxybenzone and Octinoxate). But other sunscreens are also reef safe like the Blue Lizard Sensitive Sunscreen or products from the Supergoop brand. You can also find reef-safe sunblock locally (mostly from french brands).

Where to get a tattoo in French Polynesia?

Here are some tattoo shops you could visit. You'll need to book an appointment in advance, before you start your trip. These establishments offers typical Polynesian designs.

In Papeete, you could go to Mana'o Tattoo Studio, Tattoo by Patu, Aukara Tattoo, Burns Tattoo Shop or Efraima Tattoo.

In Bora Bora you can go to Marama Tattoo (you need to book in advance).

How can I charge my gopro in Tahiti, do I need a converter in addition to an adapter?

There's no need for a converter to charge your GoPro, an adapter works just fine.





Are there vegetarian or vegan dining options available?

Yes, Tahiti, Moorea and Bora Bora offer vegetarian and vegan dining options, though they may be more limited compared to other destinations. Many restaurants and resorts provide vegetarian dishes, and some offer vegan options upon request. Look for local dishes like salads with tropical fruits, vegetable stir-fries, and taro-based dishes. It may be more difficult to find such options in guesthouses and other remote islands.

Custom and culture



What is the local cuisine like in Tahiti?

The local cuisine in Tahiti is fresh and tropical. You'll find dishes like poisson cru, which is raw fish marinated in coconut milk and lime, and a variety of fresh fruits such as pineapple and bananas. Meals often include local staples like taro and breadfruit. You'll also see French influences, like fresh baguettes and pastries. Overall, Tahitian food offers a mix of traditional flavors and modern touches.

What are the best local dishes to try while in Tahiti?

When in Tahiti, be sure to try these local dishes:

Poisson Cru: Raw fish marinated in coconut milk and lime, often mixed with vegetables.

Uru: A starchy fruit cooked in various ways, typically served with meat or fish.

Mahi Mahi: A popular local fish, often grilled or cooked in a coconut or vanilla sauce.

Taro: A root vegetable used in traditional dishes, including as a side or in desserts.

Poe: A sweet dessert made from fruits like pumpkin or banana mixed with coconut milk and sugar.

These dishes offer a taste of Tahiti's rich culinary heritage and fresh ingredients.

How should I greet people in Tahiti?

In Tahiti, a common and respectful way to greet people is with a warm "la Ora Na," which means "hello" in Tahitian. When meeting someone, a friendly smile and handshake are also appropriate.

