

Kaoha e Mave mai !



Hiva Oa - Tahuata

Information for **cruisers**





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The Land of Men

Known as *Te Fenua Enata* by the Marquesans themselves, and often called "*the Archipelago at the End of the World*," the Marquesas Islands lie in the heart of the Pacific, far from any other coast – 1,400 km from Tahiti and 5,000 km from the nearest shores of the Americas.

This isolation has given the archipelago a truly unique environment, reflected in the breathtaking beauty, richness, and [diversity of its extraordinary natural heritage](#).

The people's remarkable ability to adapt to this environment fostered the development of a civilization that left behind a rich [archaeological and artistic legacy](#) – a testament to a culture that nearly vanished.

During your visits to Hiva Oa and Tahuata, we highly recommend exploring the islands on a guided 4x4 tour to fully experience their wonders.



Te Fenua Eneta



The Marquesas Islands were inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in July 2024, recognized for both their cultural and natural heritage, on land and at sea.

Two sacred sites have now been officially recognized:

- To the west: the **Taaoa Valley**, home to one of the most famous tohua of the Marquesas, the **Upeke Tohua**. According to oral tradition, this valley is considered the mythical site of the Marquesas' first settlers. Many ancient Marquesans lived here, and traces of their former dwellings are still everywhere to be seen.
- To the east: the **Puamau Valley**, known as the *Valley of the Tiki*. It contains the largest number and the biggest tiki statues. The **me'ae iipona** is particularly exceptional, featuring the famous **Takai Tiki**, the most well-known and tallest tiki in the Marquesas at 2.43 m. Numerous legends are linked to the iipona site, all connected to the *Naiki* chieftainship and its history.

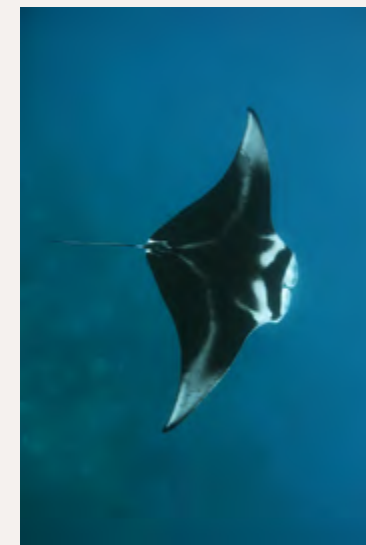


Te Fenua Eneta



Regarding the marine ecosystem, Hiva Oa and Tahuata share the same marine biodiversity, with notable aggregations of iconic species such as rays, sharks, and marine mammals.

For this reason, their coastal marine area has also been recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site.



An aerial photograph of a tropical coastline. In the foreground, a lush green hillside is covered in dense vegetation, including many palm trees. A small church with a dark roof and a steeple is visible, along with a building that has a bright green roof. The land meets a white sandy beach, which is bordered by a line of dark rocks. The ocean is a deep blue-green color, with white waves breaking onto the shore. In the background, dark, forested mountains rise under a cloudy sky. The image is decorated with a white dashed line in the top left corner and a white dashed line with a blue paper boat icon in the bottom left corner.

General information

Hiva Oa in the Marquesas

2,250 inhabitants warmly welcome visitors
and invite them to discover the island's ancestral culture.

Hiva Oa

Port of Entry

If Hiva Oa is your port of entry, here is a **reminder** of your obligations:

Before your arrival

- Complete the Single Pleasure Craft Declaration (DUP).
- Register your yacht on **escales.pf.gov** and reserve your mooring in **Atuona** for your arrival.
- Complete and send the declaration form to the DBS: www.service-public.pf/biosecurite/demarches-dbs.
- **Reminder:** Landing any products of animal or plant origin is strictly prohibited.

Upon arrival

- Fly the yellow quarantine flag until all formalities are completed.
- Go to the police station in Atuona for customs and immigration formalities, bringing the boat's documents, crew passports, proof of submission of your Single Pleasure Craft Declaration, and your health insurance certificates.
- Go to the town hall to pay your tourist taxes.
- Hoist the French flag, as well as the Marquesas flag.



Matatiki: The Tiki's Gaze

In Marquesan mythology, the Tiki is regarded as the first man, a central figure in the islands' creation stories. The flag reflects this heritage, symbolizing the presence, strength, and ancestral wisdom of the Marquesan people. Flying the Matatiki is a way to honor the islands' history and cultural identity.

✦ The Marquesan Flag

Tourism Committee

Located on **Tahauku Wharf**, the Tourism Committee is open Monday to Friday, from 7:30 to 11:30 am and 12:30 to 3:30 pm. Run by friendly local volunteers, it also offers free Wi-Fi.

Here, you can get [information and make bookings for local activities](#), check the arrival schedules of supply ships, discover upcoming events and markets, and connect with local associations if you wish to participate in community projects.

The Tourism Committee is your go-to contact to make the most of your stay on Hiva Oa, offering guidance **tailored to your interests and needs**.

comitedutourismedehivaoa@gmail.com

Mailee: Ph. 87 33 48 12



**Hiva Oa
Tourism Committee**



Waste Management

The community of Hiva Oa warmly welcomes you. Like all island residents, visitors are asked to contribute to local services through three small fees, payable at the town hall by cash or credit card:

- **Waste** fee: 500 XPF per month per boat
- **Water** fee: 1,000 XPF per month per boat
- Tourist tax: 60 XPF per day per person (over 12 years old)

Waste Disposal

Waste collection for pleasure boats is available only at **Tahauku Wharf** in Hiva Oa. **Please do not leave any waste in the other valleys, or on Tahuata or Fatu Hiva.**

These rules are essential for environmental and health safety, as no waste treatment facilities exist outside Atuona. By following these simple guidelines, you help preserve the beauty and cleanliness of the islands, ensuring that Hiva Oa remains a welcoming place for all visitors.



At **Tahauku**

- **Household waste container:**
Please use the designated container for your trash and never leave bags outside, as local dogs may tear them apart.
- **Used oil collection:**
Drop off used oil on the quay, just past the service station.
- **Used batteries:**
These can be deposited at the landfill located at the far end of Atuona village.

Important: In all bays of the Marquesas, please use your grey and black water tanks and move at least 2 nautical miles offshore to empty them.

Regulation

Visiting the Marquesas Islands is a privilege.






Hiva Oa and Tahuata warmly welcome over 700 pleasure yachts each year, arriving from Panama and the USA. There are many maritime activities in the Marquesas Islands: professional fishermen, supply schooners, and the Community of Communes managing a passenger shuttle service between Hiva Oa, Tahuata, and Fatu Hiva, there is no shortage of traffic.

Given the volume of maritime traffic, the protection of **sensitive areas**, and respect for local communities, **Regulated Anchorage Zones (ZMR)** are currently under discussion between the **Polynesian Directorate of Maritime Affairs (DPAM)** and the village councils of these bays. These zones set limits on the number of vessels and the duration of stay per area.

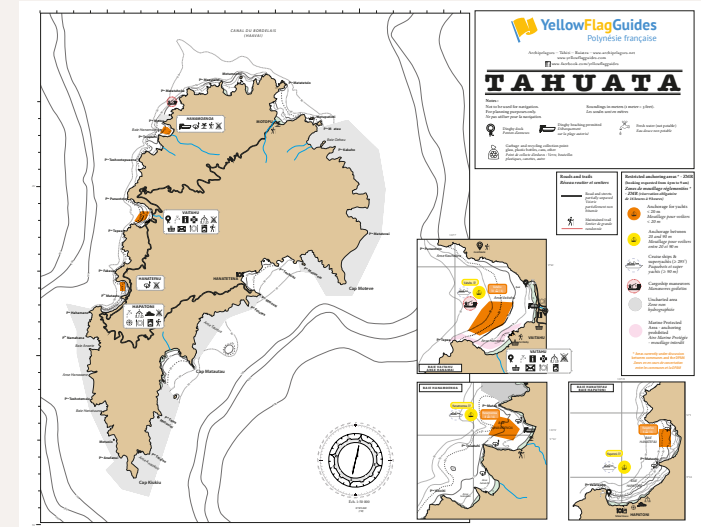
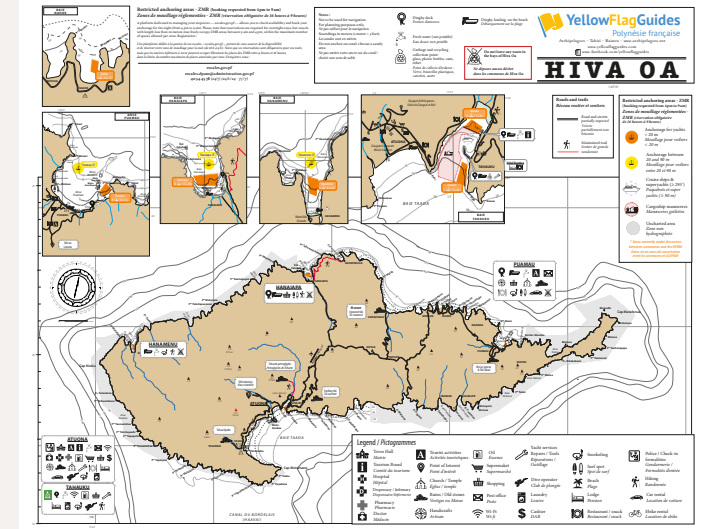
At present, **the recommended mooring points are indicative only**, pending the installation of secure mooring buoys, expected in 2026.

Zoning

Restricted anchoring areas - ZMR
(booking requested from 4 pm to 9 am)
Zones de mouillage réglementées - ZMR (réservation obligatoire de 16 heures à 9 heures)

-  Anchorage for yachts < 20 m
Mouillage pour voiliers < 20 m
-  Anchorage between 20 and 90 m
Mouillage pour voiliers entre 20 et 90 m
-  Cruise ships & superyachts (≥ 295')
Paquebots et super yachts (≥ 90 m)
-  Cargoship maneuvers
Manœuvres goëlettes
-  Uncharted area
Zone non hydrographiée

* Areas currently under discussion between communes and the DPAM
Zones en cours de concertation entre les communes et la DPAM



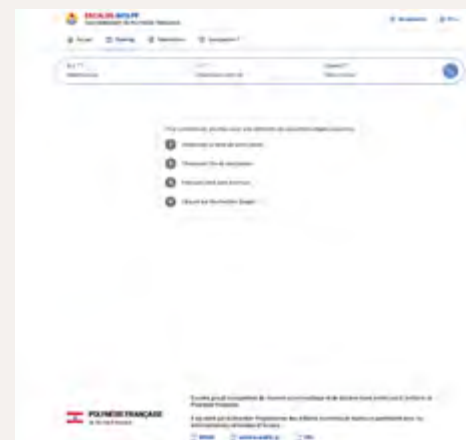
Pre-book your overnight anchorage

A platform dedicated to manage your stopovers, escales.gov.pf, allows you to check availability and book your anchorage area for the night (from 4 pm to 9 am):

- Register at: **escales.gov.pf** (the easiest and fastest way)
- Or send an email to: **escales.dpam@administration.gov.pf**
- Or contact DPAM at **40 54 45 78** (24/7)

This teleservice is in a pilot phase on the islands of Fakarava, Raiatea, Tahaa, Huahine, Moorea and Taiarapu Ouest (Tahiti), and is free of charge, but fees will be charged in 2026 and the Marquesas Islands will be included in the program.

Please note that reservations are mandatory for overnight stays (from 4:00 pm to 9:00 am). However, vessels under 20 meters may use the Regulated Anchorage Zone (ZMR) spaces freely between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm, as long as the maximum number of boats allowed per zone is not exceeded.





Practical tips



Towards responsible cruising

Your experience in the islands will be much more enjoyable if you **adapt to local customs and show respect** for the people who live here. By doing so, you **help preserve** the unique charm and hospitality of the Marquesas.

Navigation Conditions in the Southern Marquesas

- **Tidal range:** 1 to 1.5 meters.
- **Winds:** Regular trade winds (eastward), oriented SE in the austral winter and NE in summer, though influenced by the islands' terrain.
- **Swell and currents:** Significant swells can create strong currents, particularly between Hiva Oa and Tahuata.
- **Coastlines:** Steep and rugged.
- **Anchorage:** Sheltered bays exist, but some may be exposed to prevailing swells. Landing on certain beaches or in some bays can be challenging – waterproof bags are recommended.
- **Limited navigation aids.**



Tsunami Alert

The Marquesas are not protected by a coral barrier. In the event of a tsunami warning, it is advised to move at least 2 nautical miles offshore.

Hiva Oa Fire Brigade – Available 7 days a week
Ph. 18 or 40 927 999 / 87 710 499

✴ Recommendations

Let's Respect

- **No nudity**, either on the island or at anchor.
- **Dress appropriately** when visiting villages, churches, or other local sites.
- **Never trade alcohol or weapons**
- **Do not pick fruit directly from trees:** always ask first.
- **Do not use compressors** or generators near the shore or inhabited areas.
- **No illegal AirBnB or charter** activities on visiting yachts.

Let's Protect..

- **Leave your trash at Tahauku**, not in the valleys.
- **No underwater lighting** under the boat at night.
- **Avoid pollution:** do not dispose of waste, liquids, grey water, or sunscreens in the sea.
- **Practice sustainable fishing:** only take what you can consume.
- **It is recommended that you do a thorough hull cleaning before departure for the Marquesas.** This will help keep the invasive biomass to a minimum in these far-flung islands.

In order to keep the rhinoceros beetle – an invasive species attracted to light – from coming to the Marquesas, please ensure that you do not have this insect aboard prior to departure from your previous port.

Let's Share

Volunteering Opportunities

- **Educational Activities:**

Visit the village school principal to offer classroom sessions where you can share stories of your travels or give English lessons.

- **Environmental Protection Activities:**

The town hall can provide information on ways to participate. In any case, you can help by picking up litter on the beaches or in the valleys during your walks.

- **Helping the Locals:**

If you have skills in translation, minor mechanical work, electricity, IT, or freight transport, consider offering your help to the residents of the valleys. Sharing your time and skills is a wonderful way to connect with the islands, contribute positively, and experience Marquesan culture firsthand.

Let's Share

- **Cultural Volunteering:**

Assist with the Marquesas Islands Arts Festival, **Matavaa o te Henua Enana**, held every two years, including inter-island transport and accommodation during the festival.

- **Upcoming Festivals:**

- December 2027 in Hiva Oa

If you would like to help with the organization, please contact the tourism committee, which will refer you to the organizing committee.





Sailing and anchorages



Hiva Oa & Tahuata

To preserve the archipelago, please respect its population and its UNESCO classification.
Navigation and anchoring in the bays are subject to certain requirements.



Hiva Oa, the Island of Tiki and Artists

Hiva Oa is world-famous, both for the international artists who spent their final days here and are buried on the island, and especially for its [unique sites](#) filled with [pae pae](#) and [tiki](#) statues.

Tahauku

Two regulated anchorage areas

Outside the breakwater

- Quota: 5 yachts
- Duration: days, renewable up to 20 days

Anchoring in 10–12 meters of water. Exposed to swell, this zone allows a short stopover while waiting for a spot further inside the bay. Until mooring buoys are installed, take care not to damage the internet cable located in this area.

Inside, at the Bay's End

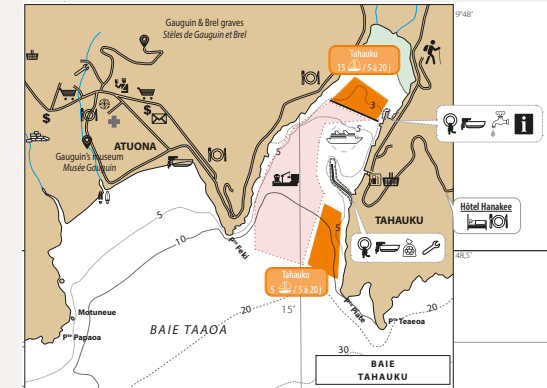
- Quota: 15 yachts
- Duration: days, renewable up to 20 days

Anchoring in 5 meters of water. While waiting for mooring lines and mooring buoys to be installed, please moor as best you can to optimize the available space and avoid obstructing the traffic of schooners, shuttles, and cruise ships, which are essential to the island's activities.



Access to shore

- In front of the Tourism Committee, at the quay, or by pulling your dinghy ashore via the va'a club slipway.
- Near the breakwater, behind the CODIM shuttle area.
- Or pull your dinghy onto the slipway in front of **Marquises Maintenance Service**.
- In calm weather, you can also beach directly on **Atuona beach**, but pay attention to the tide.



Amenities & General Services

- Tourism Committee
- Showers and water (non-potable) next to the Tourism Committee
- Household waste collection
- Service station and small grocery store – fuel available by jerrycan only
- Boat maintenance and careening area – with showers and toilets
- CODIM boat shuttle – connects to neighboring islands: Tahuata in 1 hour, Fatu Hiva in 3 hours. Schedules and information: tmii.codim.pf – Tel: 40 02 73 07
- Car rental companies – cars delivered directly to the quay
- Ma Petite Laverie – laundromat at the entrance to the bay, open every morning
- Day passes at Hanakee Hotel – access to restaurant, pool, and transfers from the quay – Tel: 40 927 587
- Va'a club (outrigger canoe club)
- Fishermen's quay at Tahauku port

at the port of Tahauku



In the late afternoon, many locals come to fish at the quay. Feel free to join them with your rod for guaranteed interaction!

✈ Recommendations

Yacht Services at Tahauku

Hiva Oa Yacht Services can assist you with:

- Entry formalities into French Polynesia
- Duty-free fuel procedures and fuel reservations for orders over 3,000 liters
- Laundry and provisioning (delivered to the quay)

Contact: Sandra

– hivaoyachtservices@gmail.com or WhatsApp: 87 232247

Fuel

The quay's service station only provides fuel by jerrycan. By ordering in advance from Ms. Linda Wong, you can refuel by tanker truck for a minimum of 3,000 liters, with your yacht moored along the Tahauku quay.

Contact: linda.wong@petropol.pf – 40 46 88 31

Duty-Free Fuel: To benefit from duty-free fuel upon arrival in the Marquesas, contact your yacht agent.

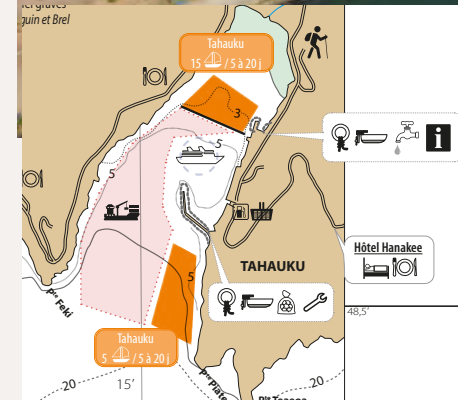
Careening and Maintenance

Marquises Maintenance Services

Boat lifting for vessels up to 16 m and 18 tonnes.

- Mechanical & Technical Services
- Outboard and inboard engines, generators, rigging, aluminum and stainless steel welding
- Electrical work, sailmaking
- Chandlery store
- Gas cylinder refill
- Water and Wi-Fi

Contact: direction@maintenancemarquises.com – WhatsApp: 87 20 99 49



The island is supplied by schooners every 5 to 7 days.
Do not obstruct their traffic in Tahauku port.
For arrival dates of supply vessels, check the municipal website, the DPAM site, or ask at the service station.

⚠ Caution / Traffic Awareness

Amenities & General Services

The village of Atuona is a 20-minute walk from Tahauku port.

- Gendarmerie: for entry formalities
- Town Hall to pay fees
- Two well-stocked grocery stores and one hardware store
- Brand-new market: fresh fruits and vegetables, fish, and local crafts
- Bakery: open from 5:00 AM
- Air Tahiti and Air Moana agencies
- OPT office and bank: cash withdrawals only, no currency exchange
- Medical center and pharmacy
- Churches and temples
- Restaurants, pizzeria, and food stalls in Atuona

Intramuros app: A very practical tool developed by the town hall, providing contacts for local businesses, weather alerts, tide schedules, arrival days of cruise ships and schooners, and must-see events and activities.
<https://appli-intramuros.fr>

at Atuona

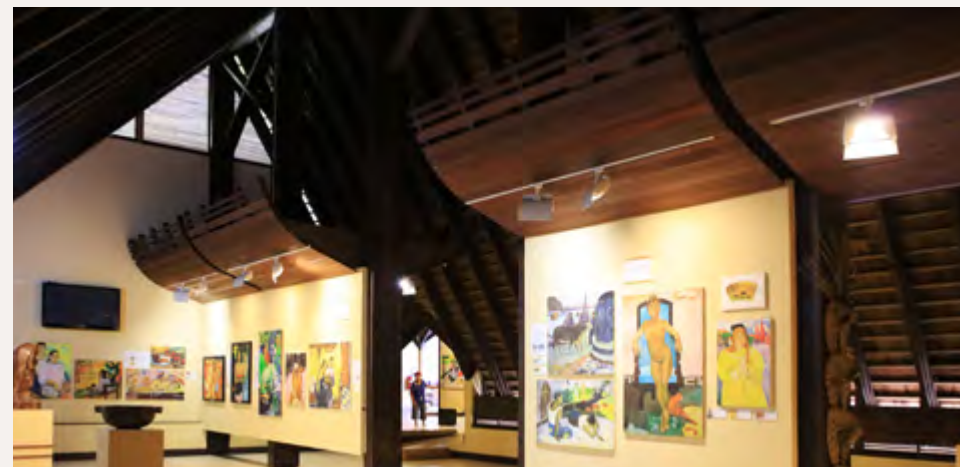


appli-intramuros



Activities around Atuona

- Book a [guided island tour](#) through the Tourism Committee to discover the magnificent archaeological sites of Hiva Oa.
- Village Tohua: lively site with many events during cruise ship stopovers.
- [Paul Gauguin Cultural Center](#)
- [Jacques Brel Cultural Space](#)
- [Calvaire Cemetery](#): the final resting place of Brel and Gauguin
- [Atuona Black Sand Beach](#): perfect for a scenic walk or for surfing and bodyboarding
- Hiking: book a 2.5-hour round-trip hike to the [Tehueto petroglyph site](#)
- Local crafts and tattoo artists
- Dive operator: www.marquisesdiving.com
- Snorkeling around [motu Hanakee](#): manta rays are often seen here
- A fishing trip with one of the service providers. Ask the Tourism Committee for contact details.



Puamau Bay

- ✈ Quota: 8 yachts
- ✈ Duration: 8 to 15 days

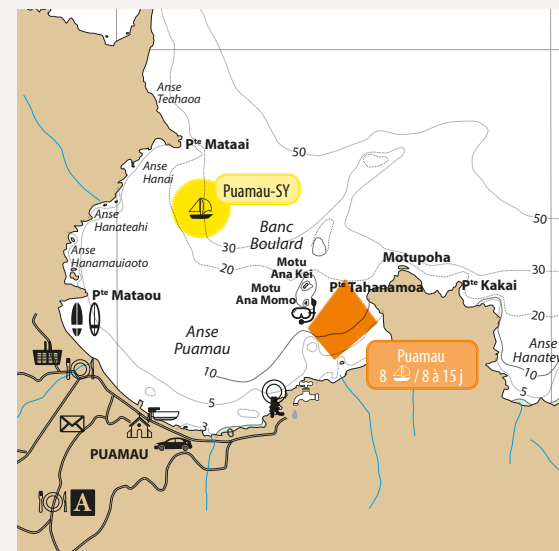
Regulated Anchorage Zone (ZMR): 8–12 meters depth.

Be careful not to drop anchor on the corals.

If the swell makes the dock difficult to use, you can beach your dinghy on the shore opposite the church and the small slipway used by local fishermen.

Village Information:

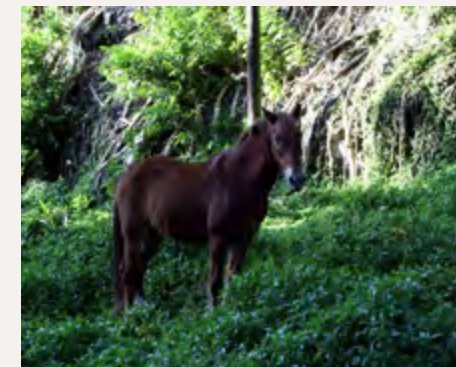
- Population: 200
- Municipal Police – 87 28 47 10
- Mayor: Mr. Pierre Touatekina – 87 31 25 42
- **Water:** at the quay
- Facilities: medical center, post office (no ATMs), primary school, church
- Small grocery store
- Car rentals: Tevenino Kuhi – 87 75 44 73 or Tehamoana Flore – 87 75 47 47
- **Food & dining:**
 - [Snack Thérèse](#) – It is here to pay 500 XPF to visit the sacred [iipona](#) site
 - [Restaurant Pehekua](#) – lunch only, next to the sacred site – 40 927 227
- **Local produce:**
 - Vegetables: Placide Tapipi – 87 30 71 62
 - Fresh eggs: Leonie Tapipi – 89 87 22 41 13



Baie de Puamau

Activities

- Visit the **me'ae iipona of Puamau** and follow the trail behind the archaeological site for an immersive forest walk and to see additional tiki statues.
- **Tiki carving** workshop with **Thierry** – create your own small tiki. Contact: 87 76 08 69
- **Hiking or horseback** riding with **Huhina** – 87 20 86 21
- **Spearfishing** trips with Yann Lorient – 87 37 52 25
- Pétanque court: join the locals from 3–4 pm for friendly games!
- Beach fun: enjoy boogie boarding on the shore
- **Underwater pae pae**: a small underwater platform just next to the anchorage, perfect for snorkeling. Make sure you don't anchor on it.
- Scenic view: **Fatu Uku** – at 7 NM – (the "lying whale") is a favorite with locals for lobsters, wahoo and reef fish. Sailing there is possible, but landings are difficult, many sharks are present, and there is a risk of ciguatera from consuming local seafood.



Puamau Archaeological Site

During your stopover, take the time to visit this site, also known as **iipona**, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The **Me'ae of Puamau**, a sacred sanctuary, is the largest in the Marquesas, both in area (over 2 hectares) and in the size of its tiki statues, such as **Tiki Takai'i** (2.67 m). The site features 5,000 m² of terraces on two levels, scattered with numerous **pae pae**, stone pavings, lithic sculptures, and petroglyphs. Five monumental tiki statues, along with several smaller ones, watch over the site.

The site will host part of the Marquesas Festival in 2027.

Reminder:

- Pay 500 XPF at **Snack Thérèse** to visit the site;
- this helps maintain it in good condition.
- Do not move any stones – it is **tabu**!



The iipona Valley was once inhabited by the *Naiki* tribe, led by three nobles who had established their residence there. During a battle with a tribe from a neighboring valley, they captured the chief of Hanapaoa and sacrificed him. In response, the clans from the surrounding valleys united against the three nobles and expelled them from Puamau. Victorious, the clans built the *me'ae* on the former residence of the *Naiki*, creating the sacred site that stands today.

✦ The Creation Story of the *Me'ae*

Nahoe Bay

- ✈ Quota: 4 yachts
- ✈ Duration: 8 to 15 days

Docking: No quay; you will need to beach your boat on the island's beautiful sandy beach.

Village Information:

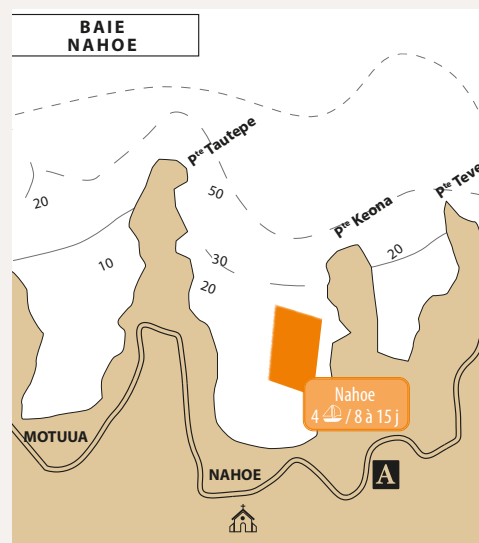
Population: 50 residents, who rely on fishing and agriculture

Local products: honey, vanilla, and lots of dried bananas – ask the locals where to purchase them

Village facilities: small church, community hall, and a pétanque court – feel free to join in!

Activities:

At the exit of Nahoe, [Maheotete Art workshop](#) offers an introduction to sculpture – 87 21 11 40



Hanaiapa Bay

- ✈ Quota: 10 yachts
- ✈ Duration: 15 to 30 days

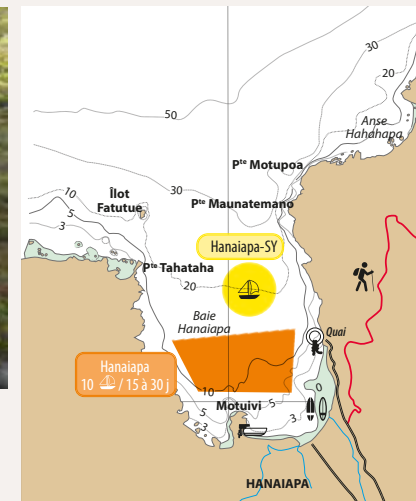
Shelter: One of the **best-protected bays** from swell, with a dinghy landing on the east side and a slipway in the river branch for hauling your dinghy.

Village Facilities:

- Small grocery store, school, church, and a livestock enclosure (goats and sheep)
- Seaside sports field – feel free to join the locals for a game
- Occasional beachsurf spot, depending on swell

Valley walk along the river – visit the **sculptor Tino's** house at the end of the valley to see his creations.

Utua Car rental – 87 34 13 62



30–45 minute hike to the neighboring Hanatekuua Bay and its stunning beach. You can ask a local to accompany you or follow the trail worn by goats.

✈ Recommendation



Hanamenu Bay

- ✈ Quota: 6 yachts
- ✈ Duration: 8 to 15 days

Access: Bay accessible only by boat – no road.
Anchorage on a sandy and muddy bottom, stable but sometimes exposed to swell.

Village Information:

Very small hamlet with only a few houses, busiest on weekends; may be deserted during the week

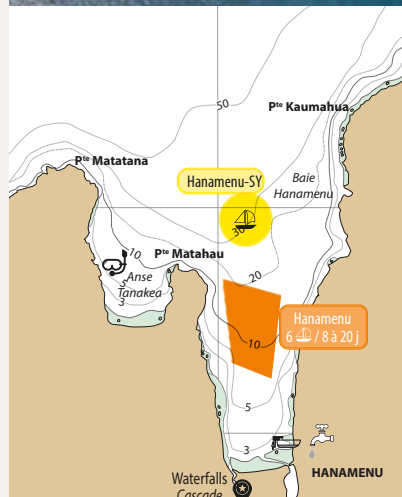
Notable resident: [sculptor Jocelito Tepea](#)

You can contact [Léo](#), a local, to see if anyone needs supplies you could bring. Léo also offers fishing trips on his boat – 87 70 71 97

No internet or mobile phone coverage.

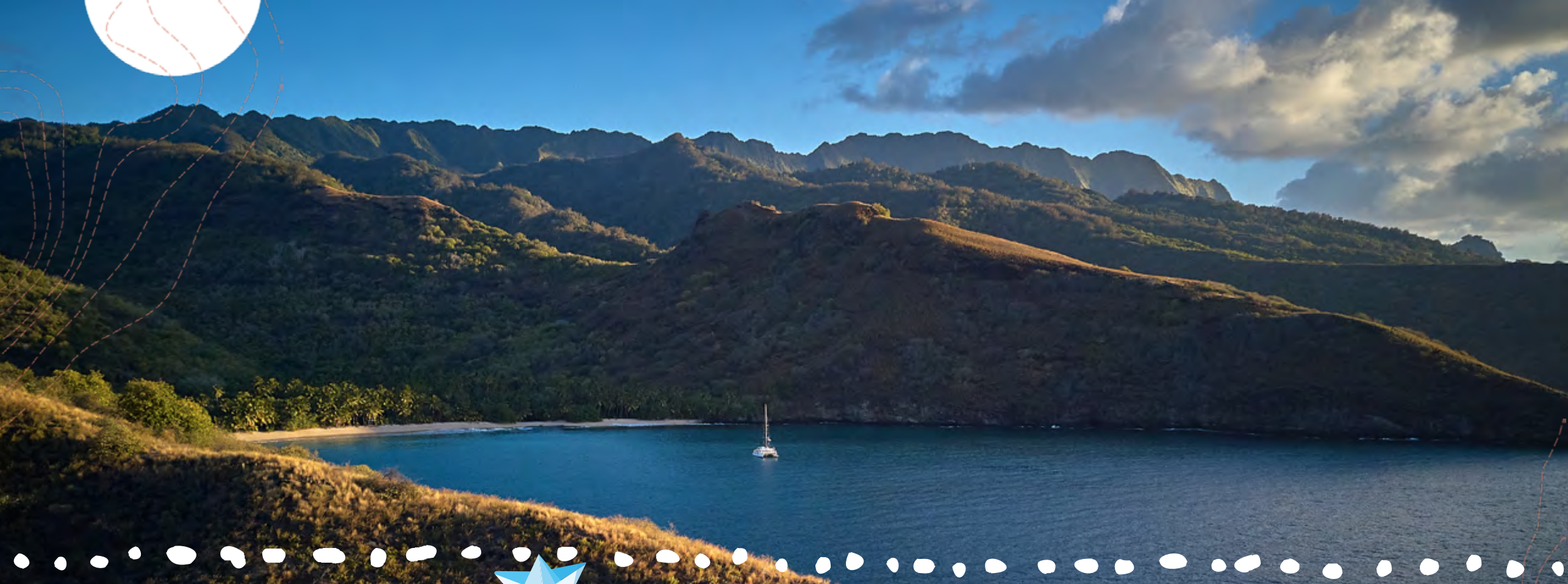
Do not throw your household waste into the bay.

Archeological excavations strictly prohibited in the valley and the bay.



- Natural spring and a beautiful waterfall – always ask permission before swimming
- A scenic 3-hour hike to another waterfall
- Lovely beach and snorkeling in the Tanaeka Valley – pass by the statue of the Virgin to say hello

✈ Recommendation



Tahuata, *the island of light*

In Marquesan legend, Tahuata represents the final act of construction, before dawn. The symbolism of its name (dawn in Marquesan) corresponds to the arrival of daylight signaling the end of the construction of the Marquesan "Great House."

Tahuata, the Birthplace of occidental History in the Pacific

Álvaro de Mendaña y Neira named this group of islands "las Marquesas de Mendoza", which later became their current name. The original name, however, is **Fenua Enata**, meaning "Land of Men."

After this initial contact, there were two centuries without further Western visits. In 1774, the English navigator **James Cook** made a stopover on the island.

Because of its natural resources, many whaling and sandalwood ships later visited Tahuata. While taking local labor on board, these ships also brought disease, opium, alcohol, unequal trade, and rivalries. As a result, the population of Tahuata declined from 7,000 to 2,000 between 1800 and 1840.

Missionaries also arrived: Protestant in 1797 and Catholic in 1838, but none were able to fully evangelize the island's population.



Álvaro de Mendaña y Neira



James Cook



lotete

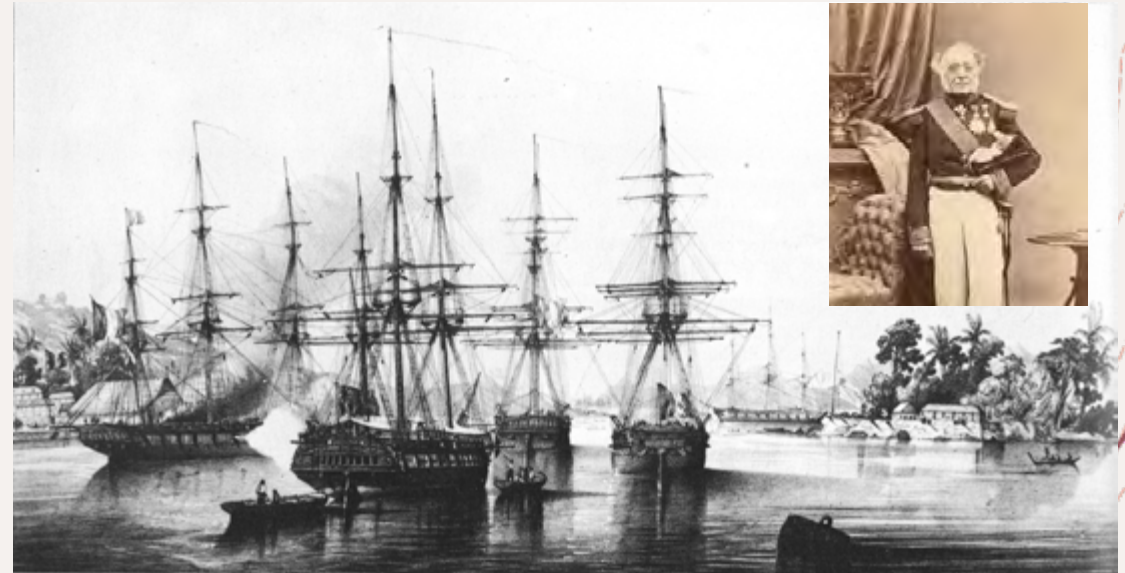
In 1838, when the French captain **Dupetit-Thouars** visited Tahuata for the first time, **lotete** was the island's great chief—a benevolent king devoted to his people and his land. He maintained the ancestral balance between humans and nature, working to protect freshwater, agricultural, and fishery resources, and ensured fair distribution among the villages. He encouraged his people to fish only in moderation and when necessary.

In May 1842, Dupetit-Thouars, now an admiral, returned to Tahuata. On behalf of King Louis-Philippe, he signed the treaty attaching the Marquesas Islands to France and built Fort Halley. However, the French demanded more supplies in addition to obedience.

By September, realizing that the French presence was more annexation than protectorate, lotete led a rebellion, including the Vaitahu ambush. Initially victorious and capturing **Fort Halley**, the revolt was ultimately quelled by the cannons of La Boussole, sent from Nuku Hiva. lotete was forced to sign a peace agreement. Missionaries gradually converted the population to Christianity, and lotete was eventually exiled to **Hapatoni**.

Even today, the people of Tahuata remember lotete:
«He fought for us, he resisted, he was our king. They say the sea has carried away his name, but listen carefully: if you strain your ear, it still whispers his name...»

A stele in his honor stands in the heart of Vaitahu village, next to the one commemorating Dupetit-Thouars' first visit in 1838.



Tahuata, UNESCO

Named "Bird Island".

Tahuata is classified by UNESCO for its terrestrial component, particularly for its summit ridges and perched valleys. One notable example is **Mount Haaiputeomo**, home to a cloud forest located between 800 and 1050 meters, where numerous endemic or rare plants, birds, insects, and snails thrive, completely protected from human civilization.

Similarly, the surrounding **Motopu** valleys host some of the most beautiful examples of Marquesan forests, from mesophilic to semi-xerophilic, containing many unique species that are carefully protected.

Endemism rate: 30–40%

Endemic bird of Tahuata: the **Pahi**

Four local guides, one per valley, are available to accompany visitors wishing to observe these endemic kingfishers.

For more information or guided visits, contact the president of the **Manu Association** in Vaitahu:
Jeanne Barsinas – 87 26 56 19



Hanamoehoa Bay

- ✈ Quota: 8 voiliers
- ✈ Duration: 4 days

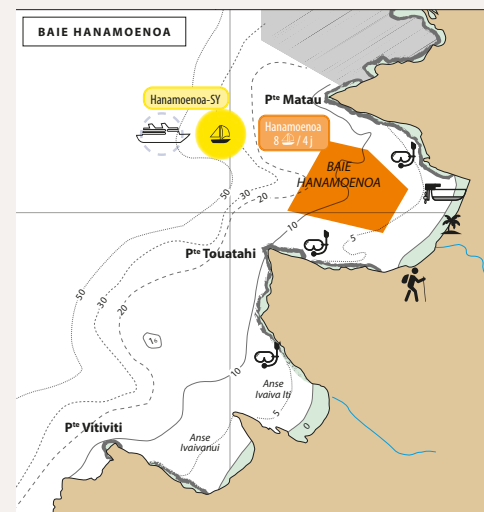
Anchorage: Sandy bottom, 5–9 meters deep, well sheltered from swell and wind.

This bay features one of [the most beautiful beaches in the Marquesas](#). A distinctive double coconut tree stands here – can you find it? There is a small beach hut where you may spend the night, but beware of nono insects, which are aggressive and highly irritating at the end of the day. Locals from Tahuata often visit for hunting and fishing: ask if you can accompany them!

[Do not pick fruits](#), as they belong to the valley residents, but locals can prepare fruit baskets for you. Contact Solange at the Vaitahu Tourism Committee – 87 26 46 64.

Activities

- Snorkeling, with possible sightings of manta rays
- Fishing
- Walking onshore and exploring the surroundings



Vaitahu Bay

- ✈ Quota: 10 yachts
- ✈ Duration: 4 days

History: Named *Madre de Dios* by Mendaña in 1595, Vaitahu Bay is home to the main village of Tahuata.

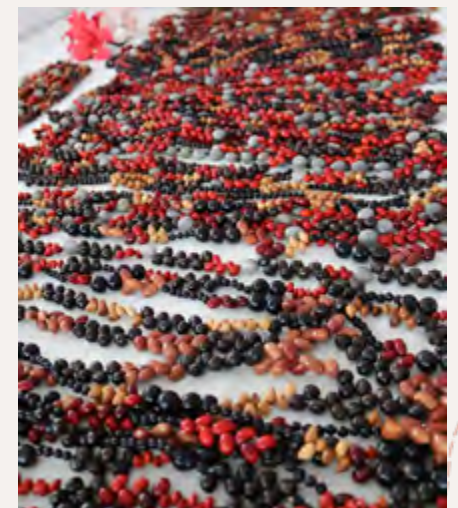
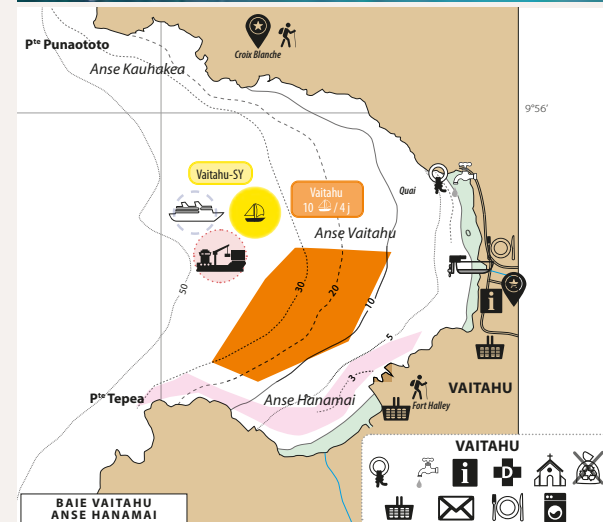
Landing & Village Access

Dinghy landing available (difficult during high swell; it is recommended to haul the dinghy onto the quay).

Tahuata Tourism Committee: Contact Solange, the president, for guidance on local activity providers – 87 26 46 64

Village Facilities

- **Potable spring water** at the end of the village road
- Medical center
- Post office (no ATM)
- 2 food stalls open until 3:00 PM
- **Snack Jimmy:** also offers laundry service – VHF 8 – 87 23 79 98
- **Snack Kano:** open daily
- **Artisan exhibitions and traditional dances** under the quay canopy, especially when a cruise ship visits
- Fresh fruits and vegetables – just ask the locals



Activities in Vaitahu

Local Experiences

Daily pétanque games from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm – visiting players are warmly welcomed.

Visit the school to learn from the children about their **Marine Educational Area** and explore it snorkeling.

Car rental with driver – recommended, as the roads are challenging.

Va'a (outrigger canoe) lessons at the village club.

Hiking: trails just above the village or to Motopu or Hapatoni.

- **Te Ana Paua Museum** at the town hall – discover the evolution of Marquesan culture as well as archaeological research methods.
- **Vaitahu Church** – one of the most beautiful in the Marquesas.

✦ **Must-See**



Founded in 2013, the **first Educational Marine Area** was created by the students of Vaitahu Primary School. Soon after, other schools across French Polynesia followed suit, establishing AMEs around their islands. These programs allow children to actively participate in the management and protection of their marine heritage. Today, the concept has spread throughout all French overseas territories.



✦ **Educational Marine Area (AME)**

Hanatefau Bay

- ✈ Quota: 6 yachts
- ✈ Duration: 4 days

Meaning: In Marquesan, Hanatefau means “the bay of the dolphins’ dream”, and it is home to many dolphins. This is a site to be preserved in its natural state.

Access & Village

Reach **Hapatoni** village by dinghy from **Hanatefau** and moor in the **small marina**.

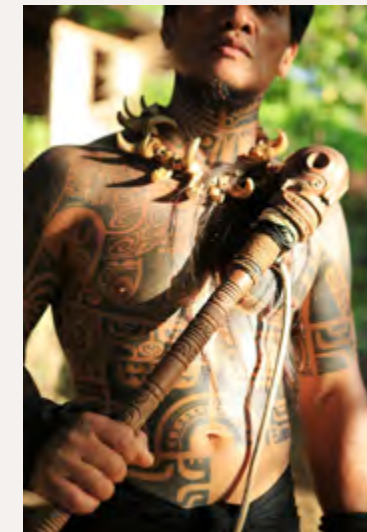
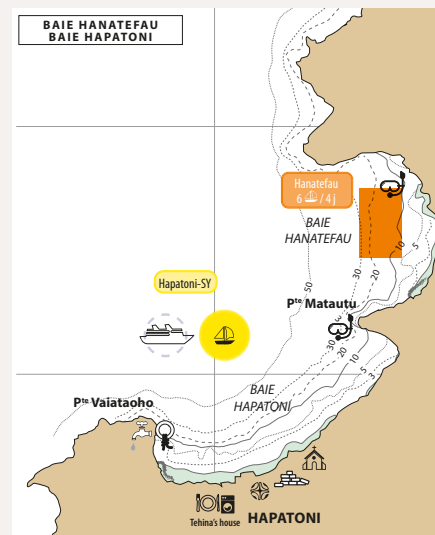
The village is distinguished by rows of large *tamanu* trees lining the paved “**Queen’s Alley**”, built in the 19th century under the orders of Queen Vaekehu II.

Local Culture:

Hapatoni is nicknamed “**the valley of artisans**”. When artisans hear the sound of the *pū* shell, signaling the arrival of tourists (by cruise ship or specific fishing boats), they gather under the village canopy to display their latest creations.

You can offer help to villagers in areas such as marine engine mechanics, repairing fridges or water heaters, small home repairs, or teaching English.

✈ Interaction with Locals



Hapatoni Village

Rich in vibrant craftsmanship, the island is home to sculptors who have passed their skills down from father to son. Men typically work with rosewood, horse bones, and swordfish rostra, while women use seeds, fibers, and plants to create ornaments. Together, they form the unique artisan tradition of Tahuata.

Fresh fruits and vegetables: just ask the locals.

Tehina, the lady of the Blue House, is very welcoming and can help organize a village tour, artisan visits, find a local produce vendor, or even prepare a meal for you.

- Meet Cyril, a renowned sculptor – 40 929 080
- Visit Viri Bonno, a tattoo artist
- Watch dance rehearsals under the village canopy in the evening
- Go on a mountain hike with Teii to try to spot a *Pahi* bird
- Take a 4x4 excursion to **Hanatetena** village with Carven Tour – 87 24 23 26

Activities



Motopu

No anchoring is allowed in this bay, as it is exposed to swell and winds. However, a visit by car, with or without a driver, is highly recommended.

This small and welcoming village is known for its [large beach](#), where locals often search for octopus and shellfish.

Locals say that, due to the valley's exposure to the sun, it produces the sweetest fruits in the Marquesas.

It is also possible to reach [Motopu](#) on foot, with the option of staying with local hosts.

Along the way between [Vaitahu](#) and [Motopu](#), you will see [two statues](#) of the Virgin Mary; it is customary for residents to stop and leave a coin, asking for the saint's protection.



We wish you

A nice stopover in Hiva Oa and Tahuata



Thanks to:

- Tahiti Tourism
- Hiva Oa and Tahuata Tourism Committees
- The municipalities of Hiva Oa and Tahuata
- Polynesian Directorate of Maritime Affairs
- Tourism stakeholders of Hiva Oa and Tahuata



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