



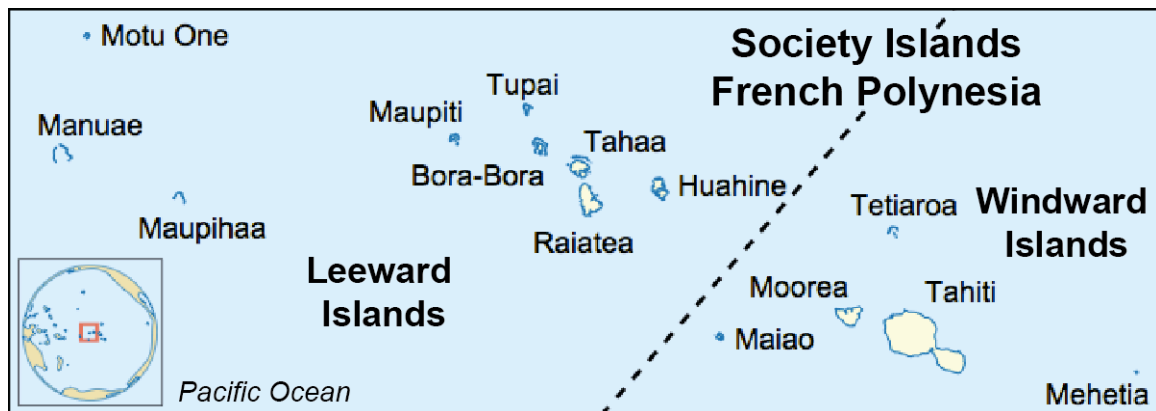
Itinerary & Overview

Society Islands | French Polynesia

Overview

Situated midway in the Pacific Ocean between South America and Australia, French Polynesia is comprised of 118 islands in the Austral, Gambier, Marquesas, Tuamotu, and Society Archipelagos spread out in an area roughly the size of Europe.

A Tahiti yachting itinerary typically includes easy passages within the protected waters behind the beautiful coral reefs that encircle the Leeward Islands of the Society archipelago. The Tahitian Leeward islands rise from the sea like emerald mountains amid a brilliant blue. Puffy white trade wind clouds ride the balmy breeze, and within the magnificent coral reefs that encircle these exotic isles are flat-water lagoons teeming with tropical fish and fjord-like bays so serene it seems time has stopped. A crewed Tahiti yacht charter touches the romantic side, inspires awe, and rejuvenates the mind. With a professional captain and a gourmet chef as crew, exploring the largest of the Leeward Islands, which include Bora-Bora, Raiatea, Huahine, and Tahaa is an adventure of a lifetime.



Although Bora-Bora, Raiatea, Tahaa, and Huahine are neighbors, each island has a slightly different ambience. Of course, the South Pacific beauty is a common trait. The exquisite reefs, motus, and beaches are too. But on one island the emphasis may be more on catering to the chic, while on another Nature is supreme. On still another the handiwork of local artists or the quiet reverence at a stone temple dating back to the earliest times of Polynesian travelers is in evidence. Together, the four treasures of the Tahitian Leewards are an enchanting cruising ground for a memorable crewed Tahiti yacht charter.

The Leeward Islands



Raiatea

Raiatea is the second largest island in French Polynesia (Tahiti is the largest) and the largest of the Tahitian Leewards, Raiatea was known as the Sacred Island. In many ways, it's still the cultural heart of Tahiti because of its rich history. The many fascinating archaeological and historic sites are well worth visiting on the island. They provide a glimpse into Polynesian culture that must be experienced firsthand. Of particular interest is the site of Taputapuātea Marae, the most significant in the islands.

Tahaa

The fragrant scent of vanilla fills the air on Tahaa, just north of Raiatea and encircled by the same barrier reef. In fact, 80 percent of all the vanilla in French Polynesia is grown in the mountain valleys of Tahaa, earning it the nickname of the Vanilla Island. Plantation tours are an interesting sojourn ashore. Black pearls, one of the prizes of the region, are grown on aquatic farms, some of which are open to the public. Local artisans craft fine jewelry featuring the pearls, and the intricate and beautiful bracelets, necklaces, and rings are for sale in shops throughout the Tahitian Leewards. Tahaa is home to a sea turtle preserve, where visitors can observe the creatures in a park setting. The island has many fjord-like inlets both scenic and well protected for anchoring, and the snorkeling on the reef is superb. White-sand beaches are ideal for swimming and picnicking.

Huahine

Locally known as the Garden Island or the Wild Island for its lush tropical forests and agricultural land used to grow crops such as vanilla, copra, and even watermelons. Huahine is actually two mountainous islands spanned by a short bridge. The larger one is called Huahine-Nui, meaning big island, and, appropriately, the smaller one is called Huahine-Iti, meaning little island. Like Raiatea and Tahaa, it is much less traveled than Bora-Bora. Miles of pristine white-sand beaches, secure anchorages, and wonderful snorkeling are major appeals of this laid-back South Pacific treasure.

Bora-Bora

The very name Bora-Bora conjures images of a far-off South Pacific paradise. The island has long been a favorite of sailors, and it still is. A single barrier reef encircles the two islands that make up Bora-Bora. The black basalt rock face of Mt. Otemanu rises 2,362 feet above an azure sea, with impressive Mt. Pahia nearby. Both dominate the heights and provide breathtaking views from the anchorages in the lagoon. The smaller island, Topua, is all that's left of the ancient volcano of Bora-Bora. Secure anchorages, white-sand beaches, superlative snorkeling and swimming, restaurants, shops, art galleries, luxury resorts, and island tours are among the pleasures of a visit to Bora-Bora.

Itinerary

Your arrival into French Polynesia will include a flight to Papeete, Tahiti. You should then take a direct connecting flight with Air Tahiti (the only domestic company available in French Polynesia) to Bora-Bora, where your luxury yacht charter crew will greet you and guide you to your nearby yacht.

Day 1

BORA-BORA

Sail to Motu Topua, the only remaining vestiges of the massive volcano that formed Bora-Bora, and enjoy kayaking, snorkeling and swimming. Later sail to Pofai Bay and then visit the Vaitape Village and enjoy a cocktail at the famous Bloody Mary's with its island atmosphere.

Day 2

BORA-BORA LAGOON

Sail along the string of *motus* (tiny islands) and participate in shark and manta ray feedings and swim with a myriad of colorful fish and turtles. The heights of Mt. Otemanu soar 2,362 feet above an azure sea, with impressive Mt. Pahia nearby.

Day 3

BORA-BORA – TAHA'A

After a morning of watching the manta rays feed at Pt. Raititi and enjoying the white sandy beaches near the point, set sail for the open-water passage to Tahaa. You'll be off the wind the entire way, sailing fast and loving every minute. The soaring heights of

Raiatea and Tahaa rise from a cobalt sea, cottony puffs of white cloud stark against a brilliant blue sky. This is South Pacific sailing at its best. As you draw near, the unmistakable sweet scent of vanilla carries to you on the balmy wind. Tahaa is nicknamed the Vanilla Island because of its vanilla plantations. The scenery is picture-perfect South Pacific. Once you're through the pass at Tahaa, the fjord-like expanse of Haamene Bay is just a couple of miles away, scenic and secure.

Day 4 TAHA'A

Wake up and enjoy a morning hike along a scenic hiking trail through the dense tropical forest over Mt. Taira to the head of Hurepiti Bay. Sail through the lagoon and anchor at a breathtaking spot north of the Mahea motu. Enjoy magical snorkelling near the barrier reef or in the Pass Tohaotu. After lunch you can take a tour of a local vanilla plantation.

Day 5 TAHA'A – HUAHINE

It is a 5-6 hours passage from the Pass Toahotu, Tahaa to the Avamoa Pass of Huahine Island. The sailing is wonderful and line fishing can be enjoyed. Visit Fare, a typical Polynesian village with some boutiques and small restaurants. A common barrier reef surrounds the two islands of magical Huahine and both are filled with vanilla, coffee and taro plantations and groves of breadfruit, mango, banana and papaya. Offshore motus lie inside the reef where watermelons and cantaloupe flourish in the white coral sand.

Day 6 HUAHINE LAGOON

The next leg of your Tahiti yachting itinerary takes you along the west coast of Huahine inside the barrier reef past a number of beautiful anchorages, with tall mountains off the port beam, the blues, greens, oranges, and browns of the reef to starboard. The rich scent of tropical flowers carries on the breeze. One of the more scenic places to spend the night is at Bay d'Avea with its white sandy beaches, at the southern end of the island's western shore. The snorkeling in the area is excellent. Visit a pearl farm set on a coral outcrop on the eastern side of the island and tour the ancient temples and the old village of Parea by dinghy.

Day 7 HUAHINE-RAIATEA

Fast passage downwind to Raiatea and enter the Irihu Pass into Faaroa bay, which is a fjord-like indentation deep into the shoreline. Steep mountains rise on either side, lush with tropical vegetation and tall palms. Beyond is the valley of Mt. Tefatuaiti. Aside from its stunning beauty, the main attraction of the bay is the opportunity to explore the Aopomau River by dinghy. In no other place in French Polynesia can you take a river trip! As you head up the river, jungle fronts both shores, interspersed with the cultivated lands of working plantations. The mountains are ever present, looming above like watchful sentinels. At an elevation of approximately 3,400 feet above sea level, Mt. Tefatuaiti is the tallest peak in the Tahitian Leeward Islands.

Day 8
RAIATEA-BORA-BORA

In the morning, it is a few hours of smooth sailing with the wind to Bora-Bora where your crew will escort you ashore.

