



TAHITI

ARANUI 5: INTO THE HEART OF THE MARQUESAS - A POLYNESIAN ODYSSEY

(TOUR CODE: 11667)

STARTS AND ENDS

in Australia

TRAVEL PERIODS

until December 2026

EXPERIENCE

Cruising
Cultural

TRAVEL STYLE

Ocean Cruising

Uncover the soul of French Polynesia on an 11-night expedition aboard Aranui 5, a custom-built passenger-freighter that has connected the remote Marquesas Islands to the outside world for over six decades.

Highlights

- **Cultural Encounters:** Explore archaeological sites, attend traditional ceremonies, and meet local artisans
- **Visit 9 Islands** across the Marquesas, Tuamotu, and Society archipelagos
- **Unique Cruise Experience:** Sail aboard a working freighter with full passenger amenities including a pool, Skybar, massage room, and panoramic lounges
- **Immersive Excursions:** Enjoy 4WD adventures, hikes, village visits, and guided tours at every port
- **Eco & Heritage Focus:** Visit UNESCO biosphere reserves and learn about island sustainability

Entire Bonus

Peace of Mind, Every Step of the Way

This holiday package is carefully designed by our team to give you complete Peace of Mind, with access to trusted local partners and expert support at your destination.

Australia's Only Industry-Accredited Tahiti Specialists

Tahiti Travel is Australia's only industry-accredited Tahiti specialist, combining genuine destination expertise with the strength and stability of an established travel group - so you can book with total confidence.

Embark on an unforgettable 11-night voyage aboard Aranui 5, a custom-built passenger-freighter that has served as a vital lifeline to the remote Marquesas Islands for over 60 years. This all-inclusive journey takes you across **nine islands** in the Marquesas, Tuamotu, and Society archipelagos—each rich in cultural heritage, dramatic landscapes, and timeless traditions.

As Aranui 5 delivers essential cargo to isolated communities, you'll witness the authentic rhythm of island life—where villagers gather at the docks to welcome supplies and reconnect with the outside world. Along the way, you'll enjoy guided excursions to sacred archaeological sites, ancient petroglyphs, lush valleys, and vibrant villages that once captivated legendary figures like Gauguin, Melville, and Brel.

With warm Polynesian hospitality, wine-paired meals, and panoramic ocean views, this is far more than a cruise—it's a deep dive into the heart and soul of French Polynesia.



TAHITI
SPECIALISTS



20+ YEARS
EXPERIENCE



ACCREDITED
& TRUSTED



ESTABLISHED
PARTNERSHIPS



TAILORED
ITINERARIES



ON GROUND
SUPPORT

INCLUSIONS

- Return economy airfares from Sydney, Brisbane or Melbourne with Air Tahiti Nui
- 11-night cruise aboard Aranui 5 in a Standard Cabin (Obstructed View)
- All meals onboard Aranui 5 (breakfast, lunch, dinner)
- Wine included during onboard lunches and dinners
- All shore excursions with English-speaking guides
- Cultural activities and performances onboard and ashore
- Port charges and government taxes

ITINERARY

Day **1**

Papeete, Tahiti

Depart from Papeete in the morning, receive a warm welcome onboard from the crew and sail to Fakarava atoll in the Tuamotu archipelago.

The day is spent getting to know crew and fellow guests while exploring the vessel that will be 'home' for the next 12 days.

Lunch, Dinner



Day **2**

Fakarava (January-April), Makatea (May-July) or Kauehi (August-Dec.)

Fakarava, 488 km northeast of Tahiti, is a huge atoll that is part of a UNESCO “biosphere reserve” because of its rich ecosystem, with an abundance of rare flora and fauna. Makatea, 210 km northeast of Tahiti, is an elevated atoll, like a fortress standing on the ocean with its 70 m high cliffs. This raised atoll is home to only 94 inhabitants who have decided not to leave their beloved island and its special history. At the end of the 19th century, large quantities of phosphates were discovered here.

Makatea was to have a unique industrial destiny in Polynesia. The island, until then forgotten by the modern world, was equipped with schools, a cinema, religious centres, various industrial installations, including a 100-metre metal jetty and even a railway, which are still today the silent witnesses of the island’s singular history.

Kauehi, 40 km north-east of Fakarava, was uninhabited not so long ago. It was gradually populated for the exploitation of copra and for several years, pearl farming has also been developed. Recently opened to tourism, Kauehi will seduce you by its authenticity as well as by the surrealist hues of its lagoon, which you can enjoy as if you were alone in the world!

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



At sea

There are many ways to while away a day at sea on Aranui 5 from immersing in the Polynesian culture during workshops on weaving, dancing, cooking, wrapping a pareo, playing the ukulele, language, and even 'tatau' or relax on deck, in one of the bars, attend a lecture, browse the boutique, work out in the gym, be pampered in Aranui's Polynesian spa, take a dip in the pool or just gaze out at the sea. When we arrive in the waters of the Marquesas, you will have to set your watches forward by half an hour.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Nuku Hiva (Taiohae/Hatieu/Taipivai)

This island is the administrative centre of the Marquesas. The village of Taiohae stretches along the beach, which is like a magnificent amphitheatre created by the successive eruptions of three concentric volcanoes and dominated by towering cliffs streaked with waterfalls. In the small village, all of the government services and residences, the hospital, bank and schools, are close by. A lovely handicraft centre 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. Here you will see 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", which originated in Nuku Hiva. For lunch, try a traditional "Umu", a Marquesan specialty where food is cooked in an underground oven.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 5

Ua Pou (Hakahau)

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 1100 metres. 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.

Energetic early risers can hike up the hill to the Cross for breathtaking views of the valleys and village below. The artisans’ centre is a short stroll into town and the offerings include works featuring the unique flower stone and a variety of carvings and children’s clothes. Before enjoying a Marquesan lunch, take in an excellent dance show, including the Bird Dance, a traditional Ua Pou performance.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 6

Ua Huka (Vaip’e/Hane/Hokatu)

This island, the least inhabited in the Marquesas, is largely arid and home to many wild horses, goats and pigs. It is also a refuge for two endemic birds: the pati'oti'o and the pihiti, which are only found here. In the early morning, the Aranui will execute a point-to-point 180-degree turn in the narrow mouth of Vaipae'e's Invisible Bay. With only metres to spare on either side, it is a skillful operation undertaken by the captain and the crew and is not to be missed. From the dock, travel by 4WD to the village of Hane.

Along the way, you will stop to explore the Botanical Garden, the cultural centre 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, hike to view red tuff tikis overlooking the bay.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day **7**

Hiva Oa (Atuona)

Atuona, principal village of Hiva Oa and the second largest in the Marquesas, was once the capital of this archipelago. Sweeping views of the harbour can be seen after 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.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 8

Hiva Oa (Puamau) – Tahuata (Vaitahu)

A morning drive by 4WD takes you to Puamau to visit the most important local archeological site for tikis in French Polynesia. Our guides will show you through the mysterious ruins at Mea'e lipona and share stories of these haunting statues and an ancient civilisation.

In the afternoon, you will visit the impressive church of Tahuata which was built by the Vatican and decorated with beautiful carvings and a stained glass window featuring the Marquesan cross. Though the smallest of the inhabited Marquesan islands, it is historically one of the richest. Tahuata has experienced it all — it was the first island in the archipelago to be discovered by Spanish explorers, who opened fire on a crowd of curious islanders in 1595, saw the arrival of missionaries in 1797 and then became the first French settlement in the Marquesas in 1842.

The locals carve exquisite tikis, sea creatures, bracelets, necklaces and more from horse and cow bone, fossilised bone, tusks and pink helmet shell.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 9

Fatu Hiva (Omoa – Hanavave)

Fatu Hiva is the most lush and remote island in the archipelago, and is also a centre 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 is then dried and painted with traditional designs. Another demonstration will show the making of the kumuhei, a bouquet used by the local women to perfume their hair.

The adjacent craft centre offers tapa, carvings, hand-dyed pareo and some of the finest monoi coconut oil found in these islands. Following the visit of the village, active passengers may choose to hike from Omoa to Hanavave, a 16 km hike offering spectacular views of towering cliffs. A picnic lunch will be served at the summit. Non-hikers will sail on the Aranui to Hanavave's 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.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 10 At sea

Enjoy a day at sea to relax by the pool and participate in one of the lectures or activities offered by our guides.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 11 Rangiroa

Rangiroa or “huge sky” is the largest atoll in French Polynesia and the second largest in the world. The seemingly endless blue lagoon attracts divers to snorkel, scuba or shoot the pass surrounded by fish of every size, colour and shape. Rangiroa is famous for its majestic manta rays.

It is also home to stunning pearls in all shades and local artisans known for their fine shell jewellery. While in Rangiroa, you will have the opportunity to enjoy the magnificent lagoon on a glass bottom boat tour or swimming, snorkelling or diving. You can also visit one of the finest pearl farms in the Tuamotus to learn about these rare gems and see how they are grown.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 12 Return to Tahiti (Papeete)

This is the end of our journey. It's time to say *Nānā!* (Goodbye) to your travel companions, to the Polynesian staff and Aranui guides.

Morning arrival into Papeete by around 7:00 AM and guests disembark.

Breakfast



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

French

LOCAL CURRENCY

CFP franc

FROM price reflects the lowest available price within the advertised travel period (e.g. April to October). Pricing varies depending on travel dates, availability and demand, and may not be available on all departures. Higher pricing applies during peak and shoulder periods. Final pricing is confirmed at the time of enquiry or booking. Please refer to [Pricing & Price Conditions](#) for full details, including inclusions, exclusions and other conditions.

IN PARTNERSHIP

