



TAHITI

ARANOA: AUSTRAL ISLANDS & RAPA - A TRUE POLYNESIAN ESCAPE

(TOUR CODE: 16688)

STARTS AND ENDS

in Australia

TRAVEL PERIODS

from January 2027

EXPERIENCE

[Cruising](#)
[Cultural](#)

TRAVEL STYLE

Ocean Cruising

Explore Tahiti's remote Austral Islands and Rapa on a cultural voyage through untouched Polynesia.

Highlights

- **Fly Direct** to French Polynesia **from Sydney**
- Visit the remote island of **Rapa**, celebrated for its rugged landscapes, deep bays, and strong cultural traditions.
- Explore the Austral Islands, including **Tubuai**, **Raivavae**, and **Rurutu**, known for their unspoilt beauty and relaxed island life.
- Experience authentic Polynesian culture through village visits, local storytelling, and traditional welcomes.
- Discover historic sites, coastal viewpoints, and walking trails that reveal the islands' heritage.
- Enjoy a relaxed expedition-style cruise aboard the Aranui, combining comfort with cultural discovery.

Entire Bonus

BONUS: Enjoy exclusive savings of up to 15% off the cruise

BONUS: Free return transfers between the International Airport and hotel

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 voyage through French Polynesia's most remote and captivating islands with this Austral Islands and Rapa cruise aboard the Aranoa. Departing from Tahiti, the journey blends cultural immersion with natural discovery as you visit lesser-known islands such as Tubuai, Raivavae, Rurutu, and the far-flung island of Rapa, renowned for its dramatic landscapes and strong cultural traditions. Along the way, enjoy guided village visits, scenic walks, historic sites, and warm encounters with local communities, offering rare insight into authentic Polynesian life. With comfortable onboard accommodation, local cuisine, and a relaxed expedition style, this cruise is ideal for travellers seeking an off-the-beaten-track adventure that showcases the untouched beauty, history, and spirit of the South Pacific.



TAHITI
SPECIALISTS



20+ YEARS
EXPERIENCE



ACCREDITED
& TRUSTED



ESTABLISHED
PARTNERSHIPS



TAILORED
ITINERARIES



ON GROUND
SUPPORT

INCLUSIONS

- Return Economy Class Airfares with Air Tahiti Nui's direct flight from Sydney
- 12-night cruise aboard Aranoa in a Standard Cabin (Obstructed View)
- 1 night at Maitai Express Tahiti in a Standard Room King - ★★
- Saturday Departures for Aranoa
- Airport meet & greet with traditional flower lei
- All transfers between airport, hotel, and cruise terminal
- All onboard meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner)
- Daily breakfast at Maitai Express Tahiti
- Wine included during onboard lunches and dinners
- All shore excursions with English-speaking guides
- Port charges and government taxes

ITINERARY

Day

1

Airport Maitai Express Tahiti

Upon arrival at Faa'a International Airport, you will be transferred to Maitai Express Tahiti. Perfectly located in downtown Papeete, the hotel offers easy access to the waterfront, local markets, and the city's lively dining scene. Spend the evening at leisure, perhaps sampling dinner from the famous food truck "roulottes" or taking a stroll along the harbor.

Overnight stay in Tahiti at **Maitai Express Tahiti** in a Standard Room King.



HOTEL LOBBY | MAITAI EXPRESS TAHITI

Day 2

Maitai Express Tahiti Papeete Moorea

Enjoy a leisurely morning at the Maitai Express Tahiti before checking out of the hotel.

Check-in opens from 9:00 am at the Papeete Cruise Terminal, with departure at 12:00 pm aboard the *Aranoa*. The journey begins with a visit to Tahiti's sister island, Moorea, before heading south to the remote Austral Islands—promising a memorable mix of culture, tradition, and stunning scenery.

The *Aranoa* is scheduled to arrive in Moorea at around 2:00 pm, giving guests the chance to explore the island or join optional shore activities.

At 10:00 pm, the ship departs the Society Islands and sets course for the Austral Islands, marking the start of the expedition proper.

Breakfast, Dinner



MOOREA | CREDITS: ARANUI CRUISES

Day 3

At Sea

Enjoy a leisurely day at sea, whether you choose to unwind on the Pool Deck, relax in the comfort of the air-conditioned lounge, or simply take in the sweeping views of the South Pacific as the ship makes its way back to the Society Islands. Enrich your journey with onboard talks highlighting the company's culture and history, offering insight into the values at the heart of the experience. Staying true to Polynesian tradition, evening entertainment features introductions to Polynesian songs and Tahitian dance, capped off with vibrant performances and starlit shows on deck.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day **4**

Rimatara

The *Araña* docks at the **Taanini quay**, welcoming you to **Rimatara**, a small circular volcanic plateau and the last island of the Austral archipelago to be discovered in the 19th century. Remarkably unspoilt, Rimatara has preserved its ancient customs and even its own local dialect. The island is also home to the colourful **Kuhl's lorikeet**, known locally as the *Ura*, a rare endemic bird also found in the Cook Islands.

After a traditional smoke purification ceremony, you'll explore the island's main villages—**Amaru, Anapoto, and Motuaura**—by minibus or truck. In Amaru, visit the historic seaside cemetery where generations of Rimatara's kings and queens are laid to rest, along with local legends tied to the royal tombs.

Enjoy a relaxed beachside barbecue at **Motuaura Beach**, where crystal-clear waters invite swimming, snorkelling, and diving. Lush with taro plantations and fruit trees, Rimatara feels like a natural garden, complete with a freshwater well. For wildlife enthusiasts, an optional guided outing to observe the rare *Ura* parakeet is available (registration required onboard).

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day **5**

Rurutu

Rurutu is one of the two largest raised atolls in French Polynesia and stands out for its unusual geological formation. Dramatic basalt and limestone cliffs are dotted with caves once used as homes by early islanders, while the island's volcanic heart is covered in lush tropical forest. White-sand beaches and sweeping bays provide stunning coastal views at every turn.

Rurutu is renowned across Polynesia for its outstanding handicrafts, particularly traditional basketry. Locally made hats, bags, baskets, and mats crafted from pandanus leaves and natural fibres are a highlight of the island.

With the *Aranui* anchored offshore, guests disembark by barge after lunch and arrive at the **Moerai** quay, where they are

welcomed with a performance of local songs. Enjoy free time to wander through the quiet village of Moerai and soak up the relaxed island atmosphere.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



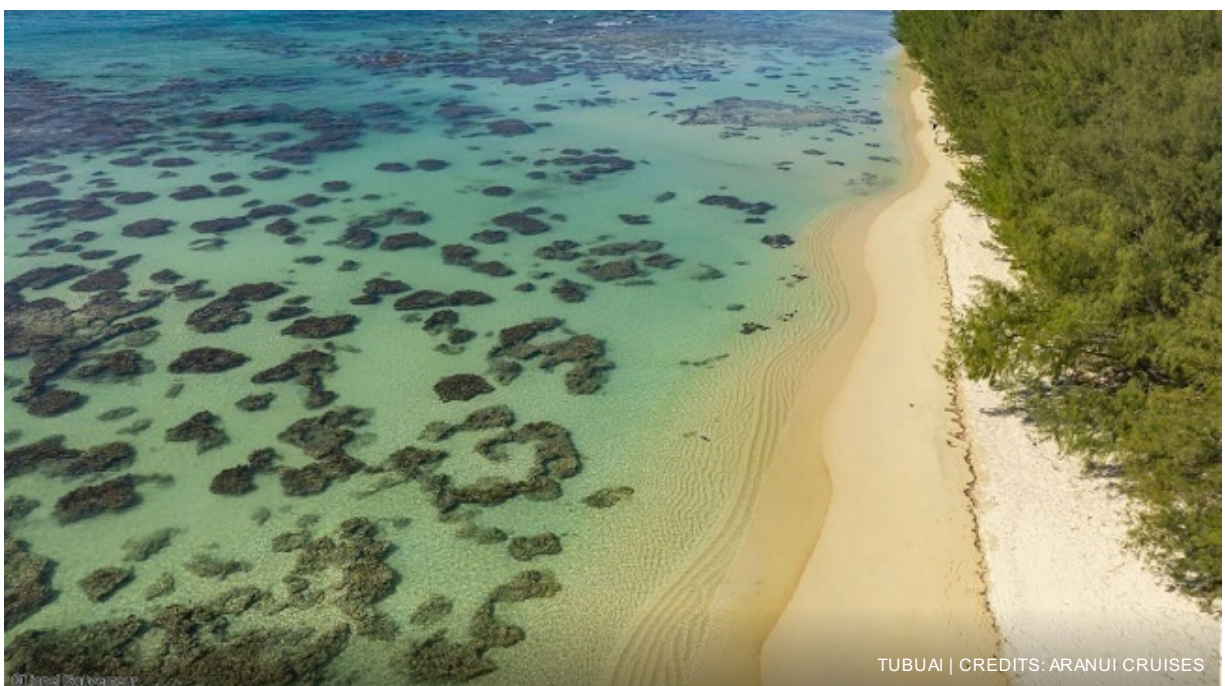
Day 6

Tubuai

Arriving by barge at the **Baie Sanglante** landing stage, guests are welcomed at the town hall with flower garlands and local music. Discover the island's unique traditions through demonstrations of pandanus-leaf weaving and shell necklace making, as well as the agricultural side of island life, made possible by fertile soil and a cooler climate ideal for growing vegetables such as cabbage, lettuce, and potatoes.

The day continues with a truck tour of key cultural and historic sites, including the **Po Tui Tui marae**, **Fort George**—the first refuge of the *Bounty* mutineers in 1789—and **Bloody Bay**, a site of historic conflict. After lunch on board, enjoy time at Bloody Bay's inviting beach, perfect for swimming and snorkelling, with optional certified diving available for those who wish to explore further (registration required onboard).

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Raivavae

Raivavae, often called the “Bora Bora of yesteryear,” captivates visitors with its pristine motu, preserved traditions, and authentic island charm. On arrival at the quay in **Rairua**, guests aboard the *Aranoa* are welcomed with local music and fragrant flower garlands. A guided island tour reveals cultural highlights including the iconic **Smiling Tiki**, hidden marae, and a tasting of traditional stoup, offering a deeper insight into the island’s heritage. A traditional buffet lunch is served in Rairua, followed by free time to wander through the village and enjoy the laid-back local lifestyle.

The following day presents a choice of experiences, from a scenic hike to **Heirani Point** for sweeping panoramic views, to a more relaxed discovery of locally made “**pupu**” **shell necklaces**. Optional excursions include a visit to the idyllic **Vaiamanu motu** and its colourful coral garden, showcasing Raivavae’s natural beauty both above and below the crystal-clear lagoon waters.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Raivavae

Make the most of your remaining time by wandering through the village or exploring the lush lagoon with mask and snorkel. An optional visit to **Mount Hiro** is available for those interested (registration required onboard).

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day **9**

Rapa

As the *Aranoa* approaches **Rapa**, accessible only by sea, the captain may announce, “Welcome to Rapa. Next stop, Antarctica.” Known as Easter Island’s little sister, Rapa is the southernmost and most isolated of the Austral Islands. Crescent-shaped and carved by twelve deep bays, the island has a cool, temperate climate unlike the rest of Polynesia—there are no coral reefs or coconut palms, but instead apple, peach, and nectarine trees thrive. The ship docks at **Ahurei**, where passengers are welcomed with flower garlands and the distinctive rhythms and songs of Rapa. From here, trucks transport guests to the cultural centre to discover local craftsmanship, including hats and baskets made from delicate reed, as well as bamboo creations crafted by the island’s “mamas.”

During the stopover, guests can explore **Ahurei**, the island’s main village, visit ancient hilltop fortresses, tour an agricultural production centre, and meet the warm and welcoming residents of this remote community. A highlight for active travellers is the optional **2.5-hour hike to Fort Morongo Uta**, offering remarkable views over the bays. The experience is rounded out with a traditional wood-fired **ma’a** shared in the village, providing a genuine taste of daily life on one of Polynesia’s most secluded islands.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day **10** Tubuai

Tubuai, the most populated island in the Austral Islands, boasts a beautiful lagoon and a fascinating historical legacy. Guests are welcomed at **Bloody Bay** with local music and flower garlands before setting off by truck to explore key sites, including the **Vaitauarii marae** and **Fort George**, once a refuge of the *Bounty* mutineers and the setting for their battles. The day blends history and nature with time for a barbecue lunch, swimming in the lagoon, and optional diving for those keen to explore below the surface.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day **11** At Sea

Enjoy a leisurely day at sea, whether you're unwinding on the Pool Deck, relaxing in the comfort of the air-conditioned lounge, or simply taking in sweeping views of the South Pacific as the ship returns to the Society Islands. Informative onboard talks offer insight into the company's culture and history, highlighting the values behind the journey. Staying true to the Polynesian spirit, evening entertainment features introductions to Polynesian songs and Tahitian dance, rounded off with lively performances and starlit shows on deck.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day **12** Raiatea

Known as the cradle of Polynesian civilisation, **Raiatea**—formerly *Havai'i*—was the departure point for the great migrations to Hawaii, New Zealand, and Easter Island. On arrival at the wharf, you'll be welcomed to the rhythmic beat of the *to'ere* drums and adorned with a fragrant *tiaré* flower. A guided bus tour takes you to the **Taputapuatea marae**, a UNESCO World Heritage-listed sacred site of immense cultural significance. Optional activities include a traditional pirogue journey along the **Faaroa River** or certified diving. After lunch onboard, enjoy free time to browse the boutiques and cafés of **Uturoa** at your own pace.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



RAIATEA | CREDITS: ARANUI CRUISES

Day **13** Bora Bora

As you arrive in **Bora Bora's world-famous lagoon**, shimmering in shades of blue and green, the striking peak of **Mount Otemanu**, the island's highest point, rises dramatically before you. Spend the day relaxing on a pristine beach with a barbecue lunch on the private **Motu Tapu**, surrounded by crystal-clear waters.

A range of optional excursions is available at an additional cost, including scuba diving, lagoon cruises by boat or motorised canoe, and unforgettable encounters swimming with sharks and rays. Bora Bora also played a role as an American military outpost during World War II, and remnants such as cannons and bunkers can still be seen on a 4WD island tour. The ship departs in the evening, returning to **Papeete**.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 14 Papeete Airport

After days filled with meaningful encounters, spectacular landscapes, and shared traditions, the *Aranoa* makes its return to the port of **Papeete**. Though flower garlands may fade, memories remain etched in the heart, leaving travellers rich with emotion and stories to share.

Our representative will be waiting for you as you disembark to transfer you to the International Airport for your lunchtime flight to Sydney.

Breakfast

ACCOMMODATION

Maitai Express Tahiti

Discover the new "express" version of the Maitai hotel chain. Offering quality services comparable to the first three establishments, Le Maitai Express Tahiti stands out for its exclusive accommodation and breakfast offer. Ideally located in the heart of downtown Papeete, it allows guests to enjoy the culinary diversity of the surrounding restaurants and famous food truck "roulottes". It also offers easy access to all the capital's tourist attractions (waterfront, Papeete market, shopping malls) as well as the city's nightlife (bars and nightclubs). Its double-glazed rooms offer a pleasant, functional setting, ideal for a relaxing stopover in the heart of the bustling city. This touch-and-go concept is perfect for travellers in transit between international flights and the surrounding islands.



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



THE ISLANDS of
TAHITI

