

Practical information

A tropical climate

The French Polynesian islands enjoy a tropical climate ; the maximum number of hours of sunshine is close to 3000 per year in the Tuamotu islands ! The temperature, which is always pleasant, is cooled by the trade winds of the Pacific that blow throughout the year. The average ambient temperature is 27° C, and the waters of the lagoons are a fairly constant 26° C. While further away from the equator, the archipelagoes down south, (the Austral and Gambier), enjoy cooler temperatures.

Average temperature

January	..... 27°C	80.6F
February	..... 27.1°C	80.8F
March	..... 27.4°C	81.3F
April	..... 27.1°C	80.8F
May	..... 26.4°C	79.5F
June	..... 25.2°C	77.4F
July	..... 24.7°C	76.5F
August	..... 24.6°C	76.3F
September	..... 25°C	77F
October	..... 25.6°C	78.1F
November	..... 26.3°C	79.3F
December	..... 26.6°C	79.9F



Preparing your trip

What is the time difference?

Tahiti and her Islands are 10 hours different from GMT. This is a 12-hour summertime or 11-hour wintertime difference from Paris, 2 hour different from the United States Pacific Coast, 6 hour from Santiago de Chile, 19 hour from Tokyo and Sydney and 22 hour different from Auckland.

What are the entry requirements?

French nationals only require a National Identity Card for a stay in French Polynesia. However, the Delphine passport is necessary in case of transit via the USA. In any case, travelers are seriously advised to be in possession of a passport valid for six months longer than their return date, in case of an unforeseen or extended stopover in the United States.

Foreign nationals from the following countries are entitled to a three-month stay without a visa:

- European Union:

Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Czech Republic, United Kingdom, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Spain, Greece.

- Other countries:

Andorra, Australia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, St Marin, Vatican, Switzerland.

- Maximum stay of 3 months per semester:

Brazil, China and Chinese citizens holding a valid passport from Hong-Kong, Macao, Bulgaria

- Refugees and stateless persons:

If holding a travel authorization delivered by France.

Nationals from the following countries are entitled to a one-month stay without visa:

- North, South and Central America:

Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Costa Rica, Chile, El Salvador, United States, Mexico, Nicaragua, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Uruguay, Guatemala.

- Asia-Pacific:

New Zealand, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, Brunei, Singapour.

- Europe:

Croatia.

Nationals from all other countries require visas which may be obtained from the French Embassy or French Consulate in the country of residence. The visa must be endorsed: "valid for French Polynesia", which applies also to aliens holding temporary vistor's permits (1 year in metropolitan France). Aliens holding residence cards for metropolitan France are exempt from visa requirements. Except for nationals of the European Union and aliens holding a 10 year residence card for metropolitan France, all foreigners entering French Polynesia must have a return ticket.

For further information, please visit the website: www.haut-commissariat.pf

Customs

Customs declarations:

Upon arrival in French Polynesia, you must declare all goods you are carrying with you and pay the relevant duties and taxes to the Customs Office. When arriving or leaving French Polynesia, certain goods are subjected to specific regulations.

For further information, please visit the website: <http://www.douane.gouv.fr>

Various items and supplies

Quantity	
Tabacco (1)	
Cigarettes	..... 200 units
Cigarillos	..... 100 units
Cigars	..... 50 units
Pipe Tobacco	..... 250 g
Alcoholic beverages (1)	
Still wines	..... 2 liters
Beverages over 22 °.	..... 2 liters
Beverages 22° or less	..... 2 liters
Perfumes	..... 50 g
Eau de toilette	..... 1/4 l
Coffee	..... 500 g
Tea	..... 100 g

Other goods per traveler

15 years old and over	..... 30 000 FCFP
Under 15 years of age	..... 15 000 FCFP

Some Pratical Details

Currency exchange/Buy rates

1 Euro =	..... 119,33 FCFP
1 GBP =	..... 180 FCFP
1 USD =	..... 103 FCFP
1 NZD =	..... 72 FCFP
1 AUD =	..... 78 FCFP
1 CAND =	..... 86 FCFP
100 Yen =	..... 90 FCFP

(Foreign exchange rates as at 6/10/2005).

The following forms of payment are accepted: all legal bank notes, international credit cards, and traveler's checks (an exchange commission is charged on the latter). The international banks with foreign exchange offices on Tahiti and on the most frequently visited islands are the Bank of Tahiti, the Bank of Polynesia and Socredo. International hotels also provide this service but a word of warning: some atolls and islands in the Austral and Gambier group have no banking facilities. At the Tahiti-Faa'a International Airport, two foreign exchange offices (Banque de Polynésie and Socredo) are open in conjunction with international departures and arrivals. In Papeete, the overseas passenger office on the waterfront is open from 8:45 am to 4:45 pm, Monday to Sunday. Closed Tuesday.

Cost of living

The following table presents the approximate prices of some basic grocery items:

Bread (French baguette)	..... 47 FCFP
Mineral water (1.5l)	..... 100 FCFP
Today's special in a snack bar	..... approximately 700 FCFP
Today's special in a restaurant	..... approximately 1 500 FCFP
Fruit juice, soda (can)	..... 250 FCFP
Fresh fruit juice (glass) in a bar	..... approximately 350 FCFP
Sandwich	..... approximately 200 FCFP
Coffee in a bar	..... from 200 FCFP
Croissant and other pastries	..... 150 FCFP
Carrots (per kilo)	..... 200 FCFP
Bananas (per kilo)	..... around 220 FCFP
Local tuna fish (per kilo)	..... from 900 FCFP
Pineapple (per kilo).	..... around 150 FCFP
Local beer (bottle of 33cl, shop)	..... 190 FCFP

What to pack?

Bring summer clothes, beachwear, sports wear and boat wear, all preferably in cotton. Have something warm available for the evenings which are sometimes cooler (lagoon side, boat trips and in the mountains). Footwear: sandals, sneakers, boat shoes. Essential: swimming costumes, sunglasses, hat, sunblock creams (intense reflection of the lagoons) and a powerful anti-mosquito lotion (useful in the islands in certain seasons).

Business Hours

Shops are open from Monday to Friday 7:30 am to 11:30 am and from 1:30 pm to 5 pm/6 pm. Saturdays from 7:30 am to 11:30 am. Some shops are also open afternoons. Most places are closed on Sunday including many restaurants except for the Papeete market, which is very busy from 5 in the morning. There you can find a wide variety of flowers, food, pareos, hats, mother of pearl, art objects and a variety of souvenirs.

Postal and telecommunication services

Papeete's Central Post Office, located near the yacht wharf and Bougainville Park, is open weekdays from 7 am to 6 pm and on Saturdays from 8 am to 11 am. There is a philatelic center at the Post Office. There are many international card-operated phone booths throughout most of the islands.

Water and electricity

Tap water in Papeete and Bora Bora is safe to drink; enquire locally on the other islands. If in doubt, use mineral water in sealed bottles. Electricity: 110 or 220 volts (60Hz) depending on the island and type of accommodation. Check before plugging in.

Health

No vaccines are required except for passengers from high-risk countries (this information can be obtained from your airline). On the island of Tahiti, good sanitary facilities and health services are available. The cities of Papeete, Taravao (peninsula of Tahiti) and Uturoa (Raiatea) have fully equipped hospitals. Other tourist islands at least possess a hospital or a clinic.

Which language?

French and Tahitian are the two official languages. English is also widely spoken particularly in tourist areas.

Tourist development taxes

- 5 % on international classified hotel rooms.
- 200 FCFP/pers/day on international cruises.

Other taxes:

- Sojourn tax of 150 F CFP/pers/day on international classified hotels, international cruises and any other establishments of equal characteristics.
- A sojourn tax of 50 F CFP/pers/day on non-classified hotels, and any other establishments of equal characteristics. These sojourn taxes are to be included in your bill in Papeete, Faa'a, Punaauia, Moorea-Maiao, Mataiva, Uturoa, Tahaa, Tikehau, Bora Bora, Huahine and Rangiroa. Children under the age of 12 staying with their parents as well as business travelers and representatives who are holding business ID cards throughout the duration of their stay for exclusively business purposes are exempt from visitors tax. In this category, the exemption extends for a visit of up to three days.

- V.A.T. on tourist services = 10 %.
- V.A.T. on hotels = 6 %.
- Tax on cruising activity (T.A.C): 500 FCFP/pers/day.

Glossary

Ahima'a: traditional Tahitian oven	Pape: water
Aita: no	Pareu: pareo
A ori !: dance!	Penu: pestle
E: yes	Pe'ue: Pandanus mat
Faraoa: bread	Po'e: fruit compote
Fafa: spinach	Tama'al: Let's eat!
Fare: house	Tamure: couple dance
Himene: song	Tapoo: hat
la ora na!: Good morning !	Tiare Tahiti: flower, emblem of Tahiti and her Islands
Ma'a: food	Tifaifai: patchwork bedspread
Maeva: welcome	Tiki: stone statue
Maita'i ? : How are you ?	To'ere: Polynesian percussion-instrument
Marae: holy religious site	Ukulele: Polynesian guitar
Maururu!: Thank you !	Umete: fruit bowl
Motu: island	Va'a: pirogue
Nana! Parahi: Goodbye !	Vivo: nasal flute
Orero: oratorical art	
Ori Tahiti: traditional dance	
Paepae: stone platform	
Pahu: drum	

