

## **RAIATEA**

The Religious and Cultural Center

When the Polynesian explorers discovered the island we know today as Raiatea, they named it Havai after their legendary ancestral home. Second only to Tahiti in size, Raiatea today is the administrative and trading center of the leeward islands. The main town of Uturoa is a sleepy little waterfront town reminiscent of Papeete from years past. With the large protected lagoon around Raiatea and her delightful sister island of Tahaa, the area has naturally become one of our top locations for sailing, deep sea fishing and scuba diving.

## **TAHAA**

The Vanilla Island

The Vahine Island Resort

**Sharing a common lagoon with Raiatea and accessible only by boat**, Tahaa produces about 80% of all vanilla in French Polynesia. Tahaa is the only island in the Society Islands that can be completely circled by boat inside the protected lagoon.

With its many deep bays and small deserted motus on the reef, Tahaa is an ideal island to escape the 20th century. Here you can explore the reef and discover the beauty of its multicolored lagoon, enjoy a picnic on a deserted motu or go hiking in the mountains and through the vanilla plantations and learn the mystery of these "orchids". With only a handful of guest houses and two small hotels, Tahaa is slowly awakening to tourism and yet it still maintains an authentic flavor of Polynesia. The intimate Vahine Island Resort on a small islet in the lagoon was voted best "tropical hideaway" by Conde nast Traveller.

**Raiatea:** On this spectacular, mountainous island, visitors can find an abundance of activities. Perhaps you will venture up the **Faaroa, the only navigable river in French Polynesia**. Maybe you will climb the slopes of sacred Mount Temehani, where you can glimpse the rare tiare apetahi, a flower found nowhere else on earth. You may choose to visit Mount Temehani which, according to legend, is the famed birthplace of Oro, one of the principal gods of Polynesia. You can also visit the haunting site of the Marae Taputapuatea, the best preserved and most sacred temple site of premissionary Polynesia.

**Tahaa: Several motu islets inside the coral reef provide ideal picnic destinations, with white sand beaches and beautiful coral gardens providing good snorkeling.** A jeep drive across the island offers splendid views and local tour guides will take you on hikes along the islands many walking paths. There is a beautiful walk from the head of Baie Haamena to the head of Baie Hurepiti over Mt. Taira, which divides the island.

The tour guides of Raiatea and Tahaa are always looking for a few good men and women to escort around the islands. They have plenty to show you: sparkling lagoons bursting with aquatic life, historic sites, old-world plantations overflowing with fragrant crops of pineapple, vanilla and papaya, and unparalleled vistas. Let our knowledgable and friendly guides help make your visit memorable and exciting.

## **Drive Tours**

With not one, but two, islands to explore, Raiatea/Tahaa is a rover's wonderland. Inland drive tours are the ideal way to savor our idyllic isles, allowing you to see the sights from an air-conditioned 4x4 vehicle. Drive tours of Raiatea/Tahaa reveal the islands' lush green valleys, pineapple and vanilla plantations, archeological relics, mountains and vegetation. You'll drive past bays, waterfalls, luxury resorts and pearl farms, and cruise along the the island's sun-dappled valleys. They don't call these drive tours "safaris" for nothing!

## **Lagoon Tours**

Seafaring visitors can take advantage of the many lagoon excursions offered in Raiatea/Tahaa.

Choose from guided tours of the magnificent Faaroa River or gorgeous Tahaa Island. There's even a "motu" excursion available, featuring a cruise to a small palm-shaded islet just inside a barrier reef. Half-day or full-day tours lagoon tours are available, and visitors can choose from catamarans or outrigger canoes.

## **Walking Tours**

The verdant countryside of Raiatea and Tahaa were made to roam, so what are you

waiting for?

Put on your hiking boots and join one of the islands' many walking tours. Excursions include hikes up Mount Tapioi for panoramic views, guided tours to Mount Temehani and treks to the

Temehani Plateau in search of the rare Tiare Apetahi, a 5-petalled flower that blossoms at dawn

The locals in Raiatea/Tahaa don't take their natural surroundings for granted. These islands are meant to be explored up-close and personal, so rent a bike, or roam the islands' serpentine trails.

### Biking

Rent a bike and access the sideroads and byways of Raiatea/Tahaa. Traffic on the islands is relatively light, creating a perfect environment for cyclists.

### Hiking

When in Raiatea and Tahaa, do as the natives do: walk. As evidenced by the good number of well-maintained trails here, walking is the basic form of transportation on these islands.

Raiatea and Tahaa are a hiker's utopia full of peaks, plateaus, lagoons and unpaved roads.

Explore Mt. Temehani, the Haamene and Hurepiti Bays, or stroll the rustic communities of Patio and Hipu.

### Horseback Riding

What could be more romantic than a horseback tour through the wilds of Raiatea/Tahaa? Ride stately Marquesan horses through the mountainous tracks. Breathe in the fragrant, fruit-scented air as you gallop along the numerous rivers. Riding Raiatea/Tahaa by horseback is guaranteed to be a captivating experience.

### Beaches

**Though Raiatea is bereft of beaches on the main island, a number of superb beaches dot the outlying reefs.** Rent a boat and sail to white-sand paradises like Motu Nao Nao, Opeha Point, Motu TauTau and Motu Tehutu.

### Deep Sea Fishing

Personalized deep sea fishing cruises allow visitors the opportunity to catch exotic specimens from the waters of Raiatea/Tahaa. Half-day outings are available, and full-day excursions often include picnic and drinks.

### Fishing

Thanks to the area's relatively low population, the waters around Raiatea and Tahaa are never depleted of fish. Fishing enthusiasts can take advantage of this fortuitous situation by chartering a fishing boat for a half- or full-day. Cast your line and catch jackfish, mahimahi, marlin, sailfish and tuna.

### Sailboat

Some locals swear that the best way to see Raiatea and Tahaa is by sailboat. In fact, Raiatea is the Polynesian base for more than half a dozen yacht charter companies.

Cruise around

Raiatea/Tahaa, or set an open course for neighboring isles such as Bora Bora or Huahine.

### Scuba Diving

Take a dive into the deep blue waters of Raiatea/Tahaa and marvel at the islands' undersea wrecks, fish and plant life. The islands have a plethora of interesting dive sites, including Avera Pass, Coral Garden and Coral Caves. Lagoon dive sites are numerous here, and many are within a 10- to 20-minute range by boat from port.

### Snorkeling

Home to a wide variety of reef fish and plant life, the area offers excellent snorkeling. Since fish-feeding is practiced, the lagoon attracts schools of eels, perches, triggerfish, red snappers, silver jacks, tunas and red runners, not to mention an assortment of sharks.

### Nighttime on Raiatea and Tahaa

is a spirited mix of dancing frolic and romance.

At the **Zenith**, clubgoers shimmy to the rhythms of disco music. A similarly rollicking scene can be enjoyed Friday and Saturday nights at **Quai des Pecheurs**. During the week the club makes the ideal place for an early evening cocktail. Meanwhile, at the comparatively subdued **Clubhouse**, patrons sip tropical drinks and watch the sailboats come in. The quaint **Chez Marie France** offers a daily happy hour.

## **ISLAND TOURS**

### **MANAVA EXCURSIONS**

Mr. & Mrs. Andrew and Roselyne BROTHERSON

P.O. BOX 559 Uturoa - RAIATEA

Tel. (689) 66. 28. 26

Fax. (689) 66. 16. 66

Half-day excursion (departure at 9:00am, return at 1:00pm). Go upstream the Faaroa river with its luxurious valley, visit with a guide the archeological site of "marae" Taputapuatea, known throughout the world as being the historical point of Polynesian migration to Easter Island or to New-Zealand;

Full-day excursion (departure at 9:00am, return at 4:30pm). Island tour of Tahaa by outrigger motor canoe, picnic, swim and sun bath on an islet "motu". Discover the splendid coral reefs and their aquatic fauna, visit a fish park and a vanilla plantation. Walk along the coral reef, search the porcelain shells, swim while snorkeling. Hike to Tapioi Mount (2 hours walk), a panoramic view point from where you can overlook the Leeward Islands together with Raiatea Lagoon.

### **HAINANUI TOURS**

Vaipiti Bay

Mr. Philippe PAOAAFAIT

P.O. BOX 155 Haamene - TAHAA

Tel. (689) 65. 61. 90

Maximum 9 people. Departure by mini-bus, at arrival and departure of shuttle boats at 7:30am, or from Marina Iti hotel at 9:00am. Return at Marina Iti hotel at 4:45pm.

Island crossing, visit a vanilla plantation, a cultured pearl farm, and a turtle park. Explanatory legend of Polynesian God of war Hiro. Stop on the peaks of Haamene. Outstanding view of Hurepiti and Haamene bays.

### **ALMOST PARADISE TOURS**

Mr. Bill KOLANS

P.O. BOX 290 Uturoa - RAIATEA

Tel. (689) 66. 23. 64

Guided circle island tour. English speaking only.

Stop at the marae Taputapuatea and at the various points of interest (3 hour excursion).

## **MOUNTAIN SAFARI 4X4 EXCURSIONS**

### **RAIATEA SAFARI TOURS**

Mr. Patrice PHILIP

P.O. BOX 272 Uturoa - RAIATEA

Tel. (689) 66. 37. 10

Fax. (689) 66. 26. 25

Tahaa circle island tour by outrigger motor canoe. Picnic and snorkeling in the coral gardens (7 hours excursion);

Faaroa river excursion by outrigger motor canoe with snorkeling around a "motu" (3 hours excursion);

Snorkeling with demonstration of multicolored fish feeding, including napoleons, and gray shark feeding upon request (2 hours excursion); "Motu" transfers and stop for a swim.

### **JEEP SAFARI RAIATEA**

Mr. & Mrs. Petero and Mirella MOU KAM TSE

P.O. BOX 51 Uturoa - RAIATEA

Tel. (689) 66. 15. 73

Fax. (689) 66. 19. 79

Maximum 8 people. Daily departure at 9:00am and 2:00pm, return at 1:00pm and 6:00pm.

A botanical ballad inside a comfortable Land Rover 4x4. Island crossing throughout mountain valleys, panoramic view of bays and lagoon. Guided visit's of vanilla plantations, detailed explanation on the flora and traditional culture. Stop at "marae" Taputapuatea and at a pearl farm, enjoy exotic fruit tasting.

### **VANILLA TOURS**

Mr. & Mrs. Alain and Christina PLANTIER

P.O. BOX 124 Haamene - TAHAA

Tel. (689) 65. 62. 46. Fax. (689) 65. 68. 97

Mountain safari 4x4 within the greenest and wildest of all Leeward islands. This circuit (4 \* hour excursion) includes the visit of our tropical fruit garden and vanilla plantation, explanation of orchid growing. Mountain island crossing with a return by the west coast. Frequent stops all along the circuit to admire the scenery and to discover trees, their origin, their traditional use. When the summit is crossed, we will have a majestic view of various bays and of lagoon while tasting fresh fruits to approach today's Polynesian life.

#### **RAIATEA 4 X 4**

Mr. Gérard DUVOS

P.O. BOX 705 Uturoa - RAIATEA

Tel./Fax. (689) 66. 24.16

Departure at 8:00am and 1:30pm, Return at 12:30pm and 5:30pm.

An unforgettable mountain safari excursion inside a comfortable 4X4 car, walking and swimming while discovering the local flora in island deep valleys and rivers.

#### **RAIATEA SAFARI TOURS**

Mr. Patrice PHILIP

P.O. BOX 272 Uturoa - RAIATEA

Tel. (689) 66. 37.10

Fax. (689) 66. 26. 25

Safari tour in Raiatea secrete island. Discover the tropical flora with its vanilla, and pineapple plantations (4 hours excursion).

#### **WALKING TOURS**

##### **LOLITA TOURS**

Mrs. Tearere Ariitu-Morou

PO. Box 184 Haamene - TAHAA

Tel. (689) 65. 61. 06 Fax. (689) 65. 65. 65

Daily pedestrian excursion from Haamene quay. Discover Tahaa fauna and flora, visit a vanilla plantation, mother-of-pearls familial farms, dried coprah platforms, stop at Hibiscus foundation.

#### **DIVING IN RAIATEA**

##### **PACIFIC DIVE CENTER**

Based in Apooiti Marina

Mr. & Mrs. Philippe and Kristel MALLOR

P. O. BOX 713 Uturoa - RAIATEA

Tel. (689) 66. 15. 89

Fax. (689) 66. 15. 90

##### **HEMISPHERE SUB PLONGEE**

Based in Apooiti

Mr. Hubert CLOT

P.O. BOX 985 Uturoa - RAIATEA

Tel (689) 66. 14. 19

Fax (689) 66. 33. 08

##### **RAIATEA PLONGEE**

Based in Tepua Bay

Mr. Patrice PHILIP

P.O. BOX 272 Uturoa - RAIATEA

Tel. (689) 66. 37.10

Fax. (689) 66. 26. 25

#### **HORSE BACK RIDING**

##### **KAOHA NUI EQUESTRIAN TOURISM CENTER**

PK 6, Avera

Mr. & Mrs. Patrick and Sylvianne MARINTHE

P.O. BOX 568 Uturoa - RAIATEA

Tel./Fax. (689) 66. 25. 46

Kahoa Nui Ranch marquisian horses take you to mountainous tracks broken into numerous rivers towards the inner sacred island. Spectacular views of the mountains, the lagoons and the lush tropical vegetation. Patrick, your guide, will make you appreciate the hidden charms of Raiatea by revealing to you the secrets of tropical flora and fauna. On your way back from horse riding, Kahoa Nui Ranch refreshment bar

welcomes you for relaxing moment and a beautiful view of Mount Temehani.

### **TAXIS, PERSONAL & PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, CAR RENTALS, ETC.**

Visitors to Raiatea/Tahaa can choose from an assortment of travel options. The islands offer plenty of safe, efficient public transportation, as well as various forms of private transport. Enjoy our tropical surroundings by aircraft, boat, car, jeep, motor scooter or bike. No matter what your schedule, the pilots, drivers and skippers of Raiatea and Tahaa are at your service.

#### **Aircraft & Helicopter**

Raiatea is served by Air Tahiti /Air Moorea, which offers regularly scheduled service to the surrounding islands of Bora Bora, Huahine, Moorea, and Rangiroa (from Bora Bora).

As there is no airport on Tahaa, it is necessary to fly to Raiatea, where shuttle boats will provide water taxi service from the Uturoa dock in Raiatea to various districts in Tahaa.

Transportation from the airport to the island's hotels and private residences are provided by mini-buses, at a charge.

#### **Le Truck & Minibus**

Le Truck, the public transit system of Tahiti and Her Islands, charges a nominal fee to transport passengers to their Raiatea destinations. Buses travel regularly from Uturoa to Fetuna on the far end of the island at 9 .a.m. daily. This two-hour trip is well worth taking for the scenery and local color (the bus turns around at 12:30 p.m. for the return leg, arriving back at Uturoa at 2:30 p.m.).

In the Raiatea/Tahaa area, the Le Truck buses are color-coded, depending on destinations. For example, Vaiaau is red while the Fetuna bus is turquoise.

#### **Taxi**

Taxis are easily accessible in Raiatea and Tahaa. Please consult your hotel for details.

#### **Motorboat**

Skim along the gleaming coasts of Raiatea and Tahaa in your own rented motorboat. Raiatea

Location rents 12 ft. fiberglass boats with 6 or 15 horsepower engines. Vessels are rented on a half-day or full-day basis.

#### **Personalized Transportation (Car, Jeep, Bike & Scooter Rentals)**

Rent a car or cycle, and plan your own comprehensive tour of Raiatea and Tahaa. The islands are served by a number of rental car agencies including Europcar, Pacificar, Garage Motu Tapu,

Location Guirouard and Tahiti Voyage. In addition to auto rentals, Europcar rents jeeps and motor scooters.

**Bikes** can be rented at some of the islands hotels, including Hotel Mareva Village, Raiatea Pearl Beach Resort and Hotel Hinano.

### **OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST**

#### **MAREA TAPUTAPUATEA, RAIATEA**

Marae are open-air dry stone constructions of huge rectangular areas paved with stones and surrounded by low walls. They were the outdoor temples of worship and the most sacred ground for the ancient Polynesians, where, at one time, human sacrifices were made. An altar of a pyramid of stones stands at one end with more stones standing upright in front of the altar to serve as backrests for those participating in ceremonies. Inland on the southeast of the island, the remains of Taputapuata's ancient site are Raiatea's most famous landmark and the most important ancient site in Polynesia. The open air temple of seven stone marea was the religious home to the Polynesian Maohi.

#### **Apooiti Marina Complex**

Home to the Clubhouse - touted as the largest restaurant on Raiatea/Tahaa - this marina is one of the more contemporary attractions in the area. The restaurant's large veranda is the ideal place to enjoy a drink on a warm evening.

#### **NA TE ARA SEASHELL MUSEUM**

Apooiti Bay

Mr. & Mrs. Patrick and Mrs. Tipea FESTOU

P.O. BOX 540 Uturoa - RAIATEA

Tel./Fax. (689) 66. 27. 00

Open daily except Sunday from 9:00am to 12:00 noon, 2:00pm to 5:30pm. Also located at the Apooiti Marina Complex, this small, fascinating museum boasts a superb assortment of preserved flora and fauna indigenous to French Polynesia. The exhibit is a bonanza for wildlife lovers, as it features over 25,000 items, including exotic butterflies, shells, coral, turtles, beetles and crustaceans. Relics and specimens from Asia and other South Pacific locales are also displayed. Thousands of shells, algae, coral, crabs and undersea fossils from Polynesian archipelagos and the entire world, as well as reptiles and insects are on display. Also on display, tropical marine aquarium.

#### **Faaroa River**

Winding its way through valleys, gorges and rainforests, the Faaroa river holds a mythic place in the history of Raiatea/Tahaa. This balmy green haven, bordered by wild hibiscus trees, is the historic site where hundreds of brave Maohi families departed on their migratory voyages to settle in New Zealand. It is the only navigable river in Polynesia

#### **Haamene & Hurepiti Bays**

These two narrow and fjordlike passages cut deep into the Tahaa landscape. Easily accessible by foot, both bays offer stunning panoramic vistas.