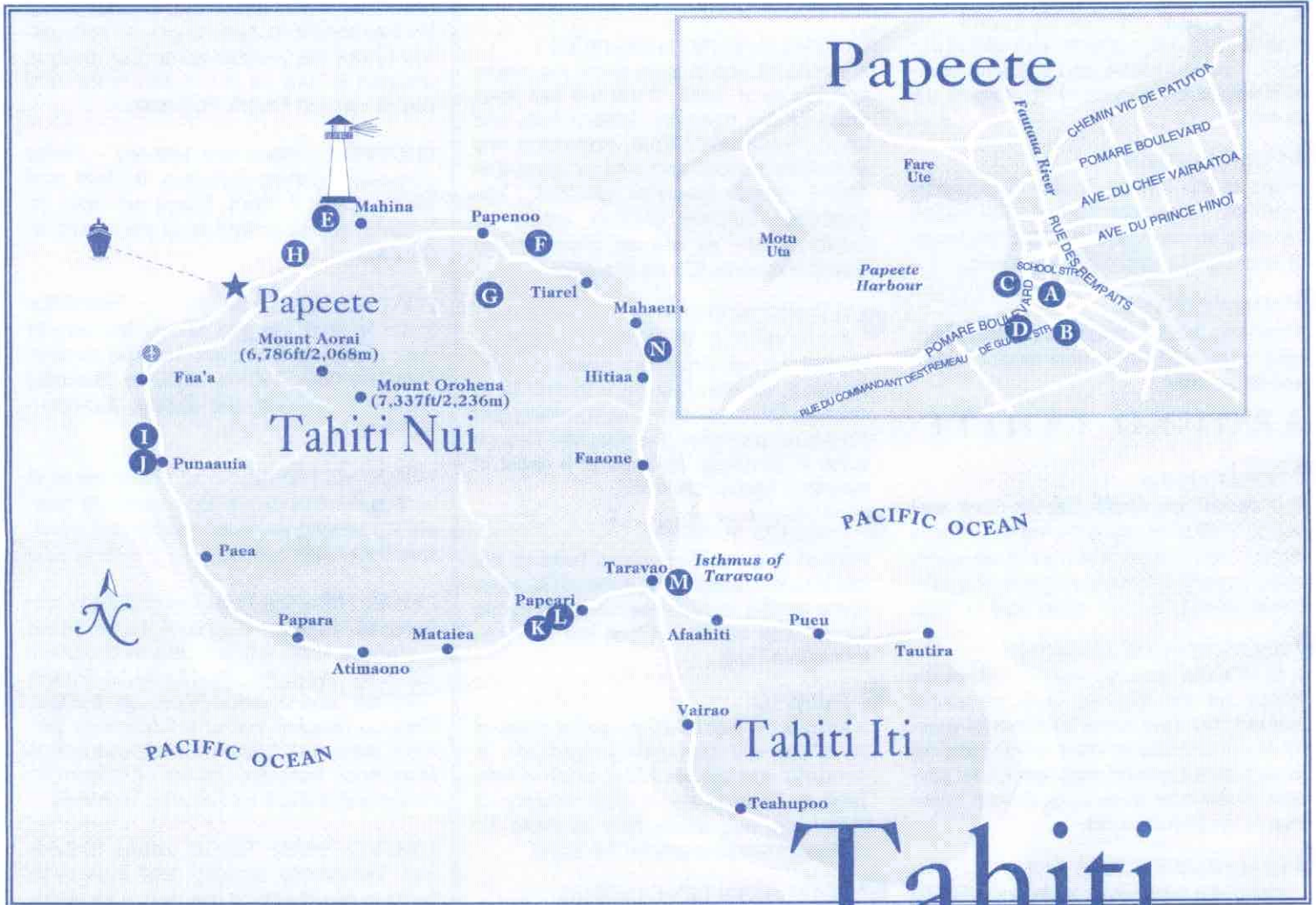


# GREAT Places

RENAISSANCE CRUISES, INC. • TAHITI, FRENCH POLYNESIA



## Tahiti FRENCH POLYNESIA

Comprised of volcanic peaks (the highest 7,337ft/2,236m) and surrounded by barrier reefs, the island of Tahiti is a breathtaking study of contrasts. Due to the high elevations, most of the island's population of approximately 160,000 people make their homes along the coastal area of the island.

Tahiti is part of the Society Islands in the South Pacific, one of five archipelagos that comprise French Polynesia. An overseas territory of France since 1946, French Polynesia covers a land area of approximately 1,600 square miles which although less than 1/3 the size of Connecticut spreads out over an area of roughly 2,000,000 square miles!

Discovered in 1767 by European explorer Samuel Wallis, it wasn't until Captain Cook made his voyage in 1769 that Tahiti became a destination of importance to the French. The arrival of missionaries as well as explorers greatly altered the lives of the native population. Archaeological studies date civilization back to

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900 AD or sooner. However, there is still a great amount of mystery and speculation as to who the original Tahitians were and where they migrated from.

Papeete, capital of French Polynesia, is a cosmopolitan, 20th-century city. Although bustling and congested, one can still feel a certain Polynesian charm. Journeying to smaller towns on Tahiti can put one in touch with the tropical, romantic tales of the South Seas and the "old" Tahiti that has become familiar through years of literature and Hollywood depictions. Home to many artists and writers, if only for a brief time, the world has long been exposed to the many wonders of French Polynesia.

## PAPEETE ATTRACTIONS

### A MARCHÉ MUNICIPAL

A public market that is quite well-known in Papeete. The history of the market dates back to the mid-19th century but it underwent a massive refurbishment in the late 1980's. A wonderful place to purchase fresh, local produce as well as fabrics and local handicrafts. Hours 5:00am - 6:00pm.

### B CATHEDRAL OF NOTRE DAME

Built in 1875, the cathedral was restored in 1987. The impressive and imposing structure is quite the contrast to the bustling city at her feet.

### C FARE MANIHINI

Home of the Tahitian Tourist Board which provides up-to-date tourist information including an interactive map and brochures of local sights and surrounding towns.

### D VAIMA CENTER

A centrally located, massive, modern shopping complex offering a large range of shops and restaurants.

## AROUND TAHITI

### E POINT VENUS

The destination where Captain Cook was sent in 1769 to measure the transit of Venus through the night sky which could aid sailors of the day with celestial navigation. The lighthouse, also at this sight, dates back to 1868.

### F BLOWHOLE OF ARAHOHO

A spectacular geologic feature of Arahoho Beach are the "blowing rocks," erosional features that have taken hundreds of years for nature to produce. Wave action pumping through below-ground passages cause geysers of saltwater spray to erupt from openings at the base of a cliff.

### G FAARUMAI WATERFALLS

Located in a rainforest is a park overflowing with three waterfalls, all of which are impressive. The larger, Faarumai, "falls" 100 feet to an inviting pool that you can stand in as the water cascades over you.

### H HOME OF JAMES NORMAN HALL

James Norman Hall, co-author with Charles Nordhoff of *Mutiny on the Bounty*, built the home just east of the small bridge on the mountainside. He and Nordhoff served in World War I together and moved to Tahiti to write *Mutiny on the Bounty* as well as *Men Against the Sea* and *Pitcairn's Island*, two additional novels about the mutiny. Hall died on Tahiti in 1951 and is buried on the hill above his home.

# Tahiti

## FRENCH POLYNESIA

### I LAGOONARIUM de TAHITI

Four fish parks, including a shark pen and several exhibits of tropical fish. Hours 9:00am - 6:00pm.

### J MUSÉE de TAHITI et des ISLES

A wonderful stop to learn about the culture and history of Tahiti. There are four main areas to the museum: Tahitian flora and fauna, Polynesian culture, exploration and missionary periods and outdoor areas that exhibit many botanical gardens. The Exhibition Building displays works by Tahitian artists as well as offerings from around the world. Closed Mondays.

### K HARRISON SMITH BOTANICAL GARDEN

Named for an American professor who moved to the island and dedicated his life to studying Tahitian botany. The sprawling gardens have pathways that meander through acres of plantings. Included is a forest of miniature Tahitian chestnuts.

### L GAUGUIN MUSEUM

Housed in a Japanese-styled building, the museum is devoted to the works of Gauguin. Some exhibits include original works by the famed artist whose art can still be seen throughout Tahiti.

### M TARAVAO

A small town that offers gorgeous views of the shore and surrounding mountains. A wonderful vantage point from which to view Tahiti Iiti. There is also a great selection of restaurants and snack bars available for sightseers traveling around the island.

### N BOUGAINVILLE'S LANDING

Captain Louis-Antoine de Bougainville anchored between two small islands just offshore at this site in 1768. While anchored, Bougainville fought to protect his ships from the strong trade winds and in the end, lost 6 anchors. Shortly thereafter, some Tahitians were able to salvage one of the anchors and they presented it to the chief of Bora Bora. In 1777, Captain Cook took possession of the lone anchor.

## LOCAL INFORMATION

**BANKING HOURS:** Most major banks are open from 8:00am - 12:00pm and 1:00pm - 3:00pm, Monday through Friday. An ATM is situated on the pier and can also be found at all branches in Papeete. Some banks are open on Saturday mornings.

**TRANSPORTATION:** Taxis are widely available though horribly expensive. Fares should be posted if no meter is present and the fare should be agreed upon by both parties before the journey starts. Car rental is available in town. *Le Trucks* are the standard way of travel in French Polynesia.

**SHOPPING:** Hours are Monday - Friday generally opening between 8:00am and 10:00am until 5:00pm. Stores are open on Saturday mornings and most are closed on Sundays.

**POST OFFICE:** Papeete's main Post Office fronts on Blvd. Pomare next to Bougainville Park. Opening hours are Monday through Thursday from 7:00am - 6:00pm, Saturday 8:00am - 11:00am and Sunday 8:00am - 10:00am.

**PHONING HOME:** Local phone cards in various denominations are required to operate the telephones found ashore and are on sale from many outlets.

**CHURCHES:** The Pofai Protestant Church: Services 10:00am Sundays. Notre Dame Cathedral: Mass 6:00am daily and 6:00pm Saturday evenings. Our Lady of Peace: Saturday and Sunday Mass at 6:00pm. Mormon Temples: Sacrament meetings generally starting at 7:30am. Synagogue in Rue Morenhout, Fariipiti: Service at 6:30pm on Friday and 9:30am on Saturday mornings.

**DINING:** French, Tahitian, Italian, Chinese and Vietnamese cooking and ingredients blend to provide some fine dining opportunities in Papeete at a price. A substantial range of dining experiences are available from the roulettes (food wagons) to many first class restaurants.

**BEACHES:** Lafayette Beach has a black sand beach with limited facilities. Tahara'a Beach, located at the Hyatt Regency has an excellent black sand beach. Point Venus, located in Mahina, has a great beach for swimming too.