

# The Tuamotus Compendium

A Compilation of Guidebook References and Cruising Reports



**IMPORTANT: USE ALL INFORMATION IN THIS DOCUMENT AT YOUR OWN RISK!!**

**Rev 2024.2 - Mar 2024**

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Email Soggy Paws at [sherry –at- svsoggyaws –dot- com](mailto:sherry-at-svsoggyaws-dot-com).

You can also contact us on Sailmail at WDI5677

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## Revision Log

Many thanks to all who have contributed over the years!!

Rev	Date	Notes
2024.2	March 2024	Fakarava S Pass Mooring failure from s/v Victoria, N Pass Moorings update s/v Enjoy
2024.1	January 2024	Updates on Fakarava, Kauehi, and Amanu from s/v Migration
2023.4	Nov 18, 2023	Updates on Takaroa and Ahe from s/v Elvira Sweden
2023.3	Sep 13, 2023	Minor updates in Rangiroa from s/v Nutmeg
2023.2	May 16, 2023	Clarification that Fakarava Yacht Services and Pakakota Yacht Services in Fakarava are different entities... Pakakota is closed. Fakarava Yacht Services is alive and well.
2023.1	Feb 11, 2023	Various updates from Migration from their cruising in Tuamotus in 2022
2022.4	Dec 7, 2022	Various updates from Villa Veritas
2022.3	Sep 18, 2022	Update on Takaroa from Cerebral Seabbatical. Added section on chart sources.
2022.2	June 24, 2022	Pakokota Yacht Services in Fakarava has been closed/sold and new owner of the property is not yacht friendly.
2022.1	May 7, 2022	Updates on Tahanea and Fakarava from Sugar Shack, updates on Makatea from Grace of Longstone
2021.10	Dec 15, 2021	Updates on Amanu, Toau, and Tikehau from Sugar Shack
2021.9	July 23, 2021	Air Tahiti Seniors Discount
2021.8	June 28, 2021	Minor update to Toau
2021.7	June 19, 2021	Updates to Katiu from Eastern Stream
2021.6	June 11, 2021	Updates: Raroia, Amanu, Fakarava, & Toau by Grace of Longstone. Changes to Hao, Amanu, Tahanea & Fakarava from Sugar Shack. New Info on Faaite from Slingshot.
2021.5	April 21, 2021	Various revisions and updates from Ari B
2021.4	April 5, 2021	Various revisions and updates from Sugar Shack & more updates from Trance.
2021.3	February 20, 2021	Updates from Trance on Fakarava, Toau, and Rangiroa
2021.2	February 11, 2021	Updates from Sea Dragon on Ahe, Kamoka Pearl Farm.
2021.1	January 4, 2021	Updates from Chugach on Motutunga.
2020.5	December 22, 2020	Updates from Sugar Shack, Hoodoo, and Luci Para 2.
2020.4	July 27, 2020	Updates from Sugar Shack on Hao, Amanu, and Tahanea
2020.3	June 1, 2020	Removed Gambiers archipelago. The Gambiers archipelago has been moved to the new Gambiers and Australs Compendium. Completed by Sugar Shack.
2020.2	February 24, 2020	Minor updates on Tahanea anchorages
2020.1	January 4, 2020	Reorganization of compendium and updates from s/v Sugar Shack
2019.5	June 15, 2019	Minor update on Hao from Jacaranda.
2019.4	June 6, 2019	Jacaranda updates on Kuahei and Amanu. Hao and Tikehau updates from Nehenehe. Various updates from Moana. Gambiers updates from Chugach.
2019.3	April 13, 2019	Jacaranda updates on Kuahei & Amanu; Nehenehe updates Hao & Tikehau.
2019.2	February 21, 2019	Makemo, Fakarava updates from Nehenehe. Fakarava updates from Lungta
2019.1	January 22, 2019	Added section on Ciguatera
		...Many Updates Over the Years...
2010	March 2010	Collection of notes first assembled

**I would like to extend a Huge Thanks to Christine Mitchell of [s/v Sugar Shack](#)**  
**For revamping this 10-year-old Compendium in 2019-2021 and**  
**Chuck Hoolihan of [s/v Jacaranda](#) for his unfailing**  
**dedication to sharing cruisers' information in French Polynesia**

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# 1 Introduction

This guide originally started out as a way for s/v Soggy Paws and a few friends to organize notes and various internet sources on the Tuamotus. Later, it became a way for us to pass on what we've learned to other cruisers. When we got to other archipelagos, we added a compendium for them as well. We have since created over 45 compendiums all the way across the Pacific and in to SE Asia. Plus, we've received updates from cruisers since 2011 (please send us yours!).

This is not intended to replace the guidebooks or charts, but to supplement out-of-date guides with recent cruiser first-hand reports, and fill in places that the guides don't cover.

We are indebted to all the cruisers who have sent in updates!

## 1.1 Organization of the Guide

We have somewhat arbitrarily chosen to organize this information, from the SE tip of the Tuamotus to the NW. This is pretty much how those coming up from the Gambier islands will encounter them (which is what we did). For those coming from the Marquesas, you will probably only be interested in the 'NW Tuamotus' section.

This guide is NOT intended to replace commercially-available guidebooks (see the section on Printed Sources for recommendations), but to supplement those guidebooks with first-hand accounts from other cruisers.

## 1.2 Overview of the Tuamotus

We have somewhat arbitrarily divided the Tuamotus into NW and SE (see the graphic below).

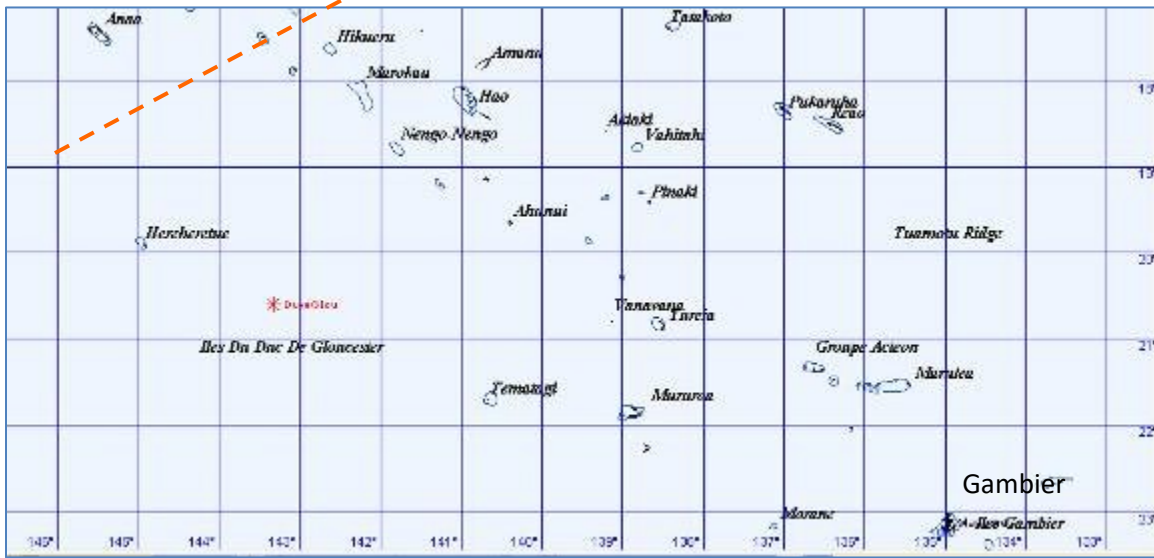
Cruisers arriving from the Marquesas, without a long stay visa, typically only get to the islands in the NW section of the Tuamotus. Cruisers arriving via the Gambiers, will often only have time to see the SE section of the Tuamotus and Gambiers.

### 1.2.1 NW Tuamotus





### 1.2.2 SE Tuamotus



## 1.3 Clearance and Visa Guidelines

The official Govt of France website: <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/coming-to-france/getting-a-visa/>

Most boats clear in to French Polynesia PRIOR to arriving in the Tuamotus (in Gambier or the Marquesas). However, if coming from Hawaii, you may clear into Rangiroa.

### 1.3.1 Entry procedures for EU Citizens

**As of Dec. 2020:** If you are British Citizen, and you have entered French Polynesia on or before 31 December 2020, then you could apply for a carte de sejour between 01 January 2021 and 01 July 2021. The carte de sejour cannot be applied for before or after these dates.

If you are a British citizen, and you arrive after 31 December 2020, then you will be required to obtain a consular visa OUTSIDE of French Polynesia BEFORE your arrival. This is similar to other non-EU long stay visa holders. Once you obtain the consular visa (outside of French Polynesia), then arrive in French Polynesia, then you will be required to apply for your carte de sejour on your arrival.

### 1.3.2 Entry Procedures non-EU Citizens

**Obtain the most current information on Long-Stay Visas and 90-Day Visas:**

- Long-Stay Visas: <https://www.jacarandajourney.com/fplongstayvisa>
- 90-Day Visa for French Polynesia: <https://www.jacarandajourney.com/fp90dayvisa>

**The data in the above links is constantly updated to provide you with the most current and vital information. The information in this compendium was only left in as an “example.”**

Most “first world” nationalities are granted a “Visa On Arrival” good for 90 days. Applying for a 90-day visa is not required and does not help with the bond or your check-in process. There is no way to extend this “visa on arrival”. If you wish to stay longer than 90 days in French Polynesia, you must apply for a “Long Stay Visa” (see above link for current visa procedures) **PRIOR** to arrival in French Polynesia.

Note that if you are American or Canadian, and your **90-day visa is running out**, whatever you do, get cleared out of Tahiti before your visa expires.

NO VISA EXTENSION IS POSSIBLE IN PAPEETE. Except under exceptional circumstances... medical issues, severe boat issues, etc., **you cannot get a visa extension on the spot in Papeete.** Getting a little extra time for a legitimate reason is possible, but those situations take a lot of paperwork (not covered in normal agent fees).

Your visa normally starts when you clear in to your first port Marquesas (Nuku Hiva, Hiva Oa, or Ua Pou), Gambier (Mangareva), Australs (Rurutu, Tubuai, and Raivavae), or Tuamotus (Rangiroa). But sometimes that isn't the exact date, so check your passports.

Flying out and flying back in before the end of your allotted 90 days does NOT 'reset' the visa. It merely stops the clock. Your 90-day clock stops (if not used up) and then restarts when you re-enter. You get 90 days every 180 days. The 180-day clock keeps running even if you are not in French Polynesia. At the end of the 180 days you are eligible for another short-term visa (90 days).

The only other way to legally stay longer is to apply for a Long Stay Visa at a French Embassy/Consulate **before** you start your journey toward French Polynesia. Panama is the quickest and easiest embassy to obtain your LS visa. You need to make 2 trips in person to the same French Consulate with your passports, about 1-3 months apart (depending on the country you submit your application), and have a lot of other paperwork done. You may also obtain your LS visa in Mexico, Chile, United States, and Canada.

**Renewing LS Visa (Carte de Sejour):** You can renew your LS Visa once a year. Paperwork cannot be submitted to the Haute Commissionnaire until two months prior to your expiry date. For example: if your expiry date is 11 April, you cannot submit your renewal paperwork until February 11 (2 months prior). You submit virtually the same paperwork (application, attestation, 3-months financials, proof of health coverage, copies of passport, boat paperwork, CDs, etc...) and you can use an agent for a smoother process. Everyone applying must present themselves to the Haute Commissionnaire at least one time per year.

**April 2019** – Renewing Cartes de Sejour (long stay visa): We had Tahiti Crew handling our Long Stay Visa (Cartes de Sejour) renewal, and we had moved on to Raiatea (as planned and as previously communicated to Tahiti Crew) when Tahiti Crew informed us that we needed to make an in-person visit to the HC office in Papeete to complete the visa renewal. After some investigation on our part, it turned out that they were mis-informed (thankfully we didn't have to sail or fly back to Papeete!), and we were able to make our appearance at the HC office in Raiatea instead of Pape'ete. – Cool Change

### **1.3.3 The French Polynesia Bond (Repatriation Guarantee)**

**Obtain the most current information on the French Polynesia Bond, Long-Stay Visas and 90-Day Visas:**

- Long-Stay Visas: <https://www.jacarandajourney.com/fplongstayvisa>
  - The French Polynesia Bond information can be found under Long-Stay Visas
- 90-Day Visa for French Polynesia: <https://www.jacarandajourney.com/fp90dayisa>

**The data in the above links is constantly updated to provide you with the most current and vital information. The information in this compendium was only left in as an "example."**

**Sept. 2018:** This write up explains the types of bonds and what 90 days really means, etc. Hoping that helps clarify some of the question's folks have on the general 90-day visa.

French Polynesia requires all non-EU visitors to either prove that they have a paid way out of the country, or pay a bond on arriving in French Polynesia. This bond basically is the guarantee that the

French government doesn't have to pay to fly indigent people home. There are 3 ways to satisfy this requirement:

1. Show an airplane ticket out of the country
2. Pay the bond (roughly the equivalent of an airplane ticket out of the country)
3. Arrange with an agent to "guarantee" you. Essentially the agent guarantees that THEY will pay to fly you out of the country, and so you pay for an insurance policy with the agent.

You must pay a bond even if you have obtained a long stay visa. The bond is refundable when you leave, with time and paperwork. The agent "guarantee" fee is not.

#### **1.3.4 Long Stay Visa**

Non-EU Citizens require a long-stay visa or Carte de Sejure (CD) in order to stay in French Polynesian longer than 90-days. Download the most current information on long-stay visas:

- Long-Stay Visas: <https://www.jacarandajourney.com/fplongstayvisa>
- 90-Day Visa for French Polynesia: <https://www.jacarandajourney.com/fp90dayvisa>

**The data in the above links is constantly updated to provide you with the most current and vital information. The information in this compendium was only left in as an "example."**

The official Govt of France website: <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/coming-to-france/getting-a-visa/>

There is a separate website for each French embassy/consulate. There is no French embassy/consulate in Hawaii, there are embassies in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Miami, Washington DC, Boston, Atlanta etc.

- A full list of French Embassies in the U.S.: <http://www.mfe.org/index.php/Annuaire/Ambassades-et-consulats-francais-a-l-etranger> (look in the list for Etats Unis for all USA offices)
- Mexico: <http://www.consulfrance-mexico.org/>
- Panama: <http://ambafrance-pa.org/>
- Ecuador: <http://www.ambafrance-ec.org/>
- Chile: <https://cl.ambafrance.org/Demander-un-visa-pour-la-France-au-Chili> another site is <https://France-visas.gouv.fr>

**2020 verified (2010):** Another cruiser mentioned that as long as you have been out of your home country for 6 months, you can apply in whatever country you happen to be in. Below, Jacaranda recounts doing it in Ecuador. I have also heard (a few years ago) that the consulate in San Francisco is the WORST. – Soggy Paws

#### **1.3.5 Do I Need an Agent?**

Technically, no, you do not need an agent to check in and out of French Polynesia. However, having an agent greatly facilitates the process. An agent will provide or help you obtain:

- Bond guarantee
- A long stay visa (renewal of long-stay visa / carte de sejure)
- Duty Free Fuel certificate
- Paperwork for duty free liquor (obtained in Tahiti on checkout from Tahiti)
- Receiving and shipping packages/mail

The [Pacific Puddle Jump group](#) negotiates a 'group rate' with Tahiti Crew to handle the bond issue and provide the duty-free fuel paperwork.

### 1.3.5.1 Agents

- **Tahiti Crew** +689 87 23 55 41, [www.tahiticrew.com](http://www.tahiticrew.com), [info@tahiticrew.com](mailto:info@tahiticrew.com), or [yachts@tahiticrew.com](mailto:yachts@tahiticrew.com). Located in Marina Taina, Papeete, Tahiti. [Services and Fees](#)
- **Nuku Hiva Yacht Services** Kevin +689 87 226 872, [www.YachtServicesNukuHiva.com](http://www.YachtServicesNukuHiva.com) or [YSNukuHiva@hotmail.com](mailto:YSNukuHiva@hotmail.com), Located in Nuku Hiva, Marquesas.
- **Hiva Oa Yacht Services**, Sandra, +689 87 232 247, [hivaoayachtservices@gmail.com](mailto:hivaoayachtservices@gmail.com). Located in Hiva Oa, Marquesas.

**April 2019:** Our first arrival to FP was in the Gambier (from Chile). We hired Tahiti Crew to help facilitate and complete our long-stay visa and fuel certificate. Tahiti Crew provided all of the paperwork, guidance on how to complete it, what to provide and how to get it delivered to Tahiti expediently. Using Tahiti Crew allowed us to enjoy the Gambier and Tuamotus because we did not have to rush off to Tahiti to process the second stage of our LS visa process. All of our LS visa paperwork had to be hand delivered to the Haute Commissionnaire (HC) in Papeete, which was difficult to do from Gambier. Tahiti Crew was very responsive, friendly, and willing to help us with anything. They speak the local language (French and Tahitian), have relationships with the officials in Tahiti, and they have the expertise to assist you with anything you may require during your stay. It was well worth the money to engage them.

If you are arriving into the Gambier, it would be wise to engage Tahiti Yacht Services as they can be located in Papeete where the Haute Commissionnaires office is located. Nuku Hiva Yacht Services and Hiva Oa Yacht Services would have to send documents by freight. In addition to visa assistance, they helped us with our duty-free certificate, shipping items to Tahiti, payment to local vendors (while we were away), money exchange, local marine vendors and more. They made the entire process seamless and easy. – Sugar Shack

### 1.3.6 Clearing Out of French Polynesia

**Noonsite – April 2015, verified in 2021:** Best to check in with your agent or the marina office (either Marina Papeete or Marina Taina) to confirm these rules have not changed, especially if you are leaving French Polynesia to another country.

**Departure Clearance in Papeete:** This is compulsory when you plan to sail more than 50 miles away from Tahiti. The normal clearing procedure in Papeete starts 3 days before your intended departure.

Three days before departure from Tahiti send an e-mail to the harbormaster (capitainerie) with your boat name, captain's name and destination (for example Cook Islands via the Leeward Islands or Tonga). They will request you complete an "Inner Polynesian Islands Clearance Request"

[trafficmaritime@portppt.pf](mailto:trafficmaritime@portppt.pf)

copy to: [sp@portppt.pf](mailto:sp@portppt.pf) and [marinadepapeete@portppt.pf](mailto:marinadepapeete@portppt.pf) (if you are staying at Marina Papeete)

**If you plan to depart Tahiti and sail to a foreign country via other FP Islands,** the harbormaster will prepare your inner Polynesian Islands departure clearance in Tahiti and e-mail it to you. You must however go and meet the Gendarmes in the last FP island touched to do the official final exit from FP. The local Gendarme will give you 24 hours to leave once clearance has been granted.

**If you plan to depart Tahiti and sail direct to a foreign country,** the harbormaster will send your clearance to the Immigration authorities. The day before departure go to Customs to complete exit formalities with them and then visit Immigration at the airport to pick up your exit clearance. You now have until midnight to depart. With this paper you can get duty free fuel, only on the day of departure.

If you had to pay a bond on entry (non-EU citizens only), ensure that your papers specify which island you will be departing from in order that arrangements can be made to retrieve your bond.

### **Departure Clearance from other FP Islands**

Visit the Gendarmes at the clearance port you are departing from at least a day before departure and complete a Customs declaration form (ticking it for EXIT). This will then need to be mailed by post to the Customs main office in Papeete. Sometimes the Gendarmes will do this on your behalf, however it is your responsibility to ensure the form gets mailed to Papeete. The Gendarmes will also stamp your passports. They will then give you 24 hours to depart.

### **1.3.7 Vessels length of stay**

Vessels are allowed to stay in French Polynesia for up to two (2) years. After, two years, you will be required to import your boat or leave French Polynesia.

A vessel may stay up to three (3) years, if the vessel arrived into French Polynesia prior to the new law in 2020 being enacted. In other words, the vessel would be grandfathered in.

### **1.3.8 Custom Patrols**

French Polynesia Customs Web (French): <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/coming-to-france/getting-a-visa/>

During “crossing season” there is normally a Customs boat wandering around in the arrival ports. They have copies of the customs declarations that are filed when you arrive, and are spot-checking to make sure everyone is being honest with their customs declarations. They are also making sure people are checking in before cruising the islands.

### **1.3.9 Arriving and Departing Crew**

Air Tahiti [www.airtahiti.aero](http://www.airtahiti.aero) offers domestic flights to other destinations in French Polynesia. Charters flights such as Air Archipel are available on request. Helicopters are another option.

If your friends (or you) want to see more of French Polynesia, be sure to check out Air Tahiti’s multi-island Air Pass. [www.airtahiti.com/articles.php?id=69](http://www.airtahiti.com/articles.php?id=69)

If you have crew who entered with you, but will leave the boat before you arrive in Papeete, you should ask officials (your agent, if you have one), what you need to do to sign the crew member off your boat, and properly set their immigration status.

Remember, you are responsible for your crew leaving the country if they cleared in on your boat.

Crew trying to fly out from the Tuamotus, through Papeete, were severely hassled at the Papeete airport because the proper leaving formalities had not been complied with.

Likewise, if you have crew flying in to meet you someplace in French Polynesia, who plan to leave French Poly on your boat, you will need to inquire what THEY will need to do get in the country. (see bond discussion above—this will apply to them as well, if they don’t buy a round trip ticket).

## **1.4 Maneuvering and Anchoring in the Tuamotus**

### **1.4.1 Tides, Currents, and Passes**

The absence or presence of navigable passes in the Tuamotus is noted in the heading for each atoll. For an easy visual representation of which atolls have passes, you can download **Tuamotu\_Passes\_ver1.gpx** from [TheChartLocker.com](http://TheChartLocker.com) and install it as a layer in OpenCPN.

The **Tuamotus Guestimator** is updated each year. It is a useful tool to use when trying to guestimate the slack tide for each pass. Download the current guestimator at <http://www.svsogypaws.com/files/#frpoly> .

The majority of the atolls have at least one break in the reef. But only some passes are wide enough and deep enough to permit a cruising sailboat to enter through them.

The current runs strong in and out of these passes. How much current depends on a lot of factors including the moon cycle, wind and wave conditions outside, how big the atoll is, how narrow the pass is, which way the pass faces, and whether there is more than one pass.

And if the wind opposes the current, there can be large standing waves. And if there are strong winds or large swell, there can be as much as 8 knots of current (see the Wind/Wave Factor discussion below). So, it is always best to aim to enter the passes at slack or near-slack tide. Some passes are east-facing, and these passes will be dicey on the outgoing current. Some passes are west-facing, and these passes will most dicey on the incoming current. (*these statements assume easterly tradewinds*)

The popular open source tide program, WXTide32, only shows 3 tide points in the Tuamotus, (Mangareva in Gambier, Hao in the middle, and Rangiroa in the NW) so the time of slack current at the passes of other atolls must be estimated. And, WXTide is confusing because it lists Tuamotus tide points in the Marquesan time standard (which is -9.5 hrs from UTC) instead of the Tuamotu time zone, which is -10 UTC). Hao is actually listed twice in WXTide, one on Marquesan time, and one supposedly on 'local time'. But as best we could tell from local observation, the Hao time is wrong by one hour (add one hour to the NOAA 'Local Time Zone' value).

After 2 months in the Tuamotus and hearing reports from other boats, when the wind is light and seas calm—under 10 kts and under 1.5 meters—you can probably safely enter any navigable pass at any time of the tide.

People typically have problems in these conditions.

1. A strong wind opposing a strong current. This is just classic wind-against-sea and can always produce uncomfortable and/or dangerous conditions. It is best to try to time your arrival at an unknown pass in mild conditions and in good light.
2. When the wind is blowing hard—over 15 knots—out of the SE thru West
3. When the wave heights are high—over 1.5 meters—from the SE thru West.

#2 and #3 cause 'unusual' currents, and is probably why there is so much conflicting information floating around about estimating slack current times.

The south and west sides of the atolls are usually low and reefy. Strong winds and/or waves from those sectors push a large volume of water over the reef into the lagoon, and the only way for this huge volume of water to get out is through the pass. In extreme conditions (eg. Wind over 20 knots for several days), there may be NO SLACK AT ALL. In less extreme conditions, high wind/sea conditions may delay the low slack by an hour or two, and advance the high slack by an hour or two.

Because the winds are typically from E - SE direction

- On a pass facing southeast (Fakarava S), you will be best to go in the pass on slack or an incoming tide.
- On a pass facing west (i.e.: Kauehi), you will be best to go in the pass on slack or an outgoing tide.

#### **1.4.2 Estimating Slack Tide**

Download latest version of the Tuamotus Tide Guestimator: <http://www.svsoggypaws.com/files/#frpoly>

**Important Note:** *Be sure to check the YEAR of the Guestimator! If you really think you need the "guestimator" you may need to update it for the Rangiroa Tide Data for the current year!!*

The original spreadsheet was developed by Gram Schweikert from Visions of Johanna. As you can imagine, it takes a lot of effort to keep this updated. Please take a moment to thank him for his hard work by donating to his “buy a beer fund” at <http://vofj.blogspot.com/>.

After a lot of experimenting, what Gram did was take NOAA tidal information from Rangiroa, and do a minor adjustment based on your relative longitude between Hao and Rangiroa, to come up with an approximate time of High and Low tide for the atoll you are interested in.

Basically, Rangiroa’s tidal times are about 1 hour and 18 minutes after Hao’s (this is not what the official tide tables say, but this is the correct figure to use).

So, if you are at an atoll located  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the way from Rangiroa to Hao (considering Longitude only), then you’d calculate the time of your local tide as  $\frac{1}{4} \times 78$  minutes BEFORE Rangiroa’s tidal time. This is APPROXIMATELY when you might expect a slack to occur in calm conditions. Adjusting for the wind/wave factor as described above, will give you a little better approximation.

Here are some of the locations that we had experience with, their normal current, and some ideas to adjust that for the ‘wind/wave factor’.

	Longitude Degrees	Longitude Minutes	Normal Max Current
Ahe	146	22	?
Amanu	140	51	4
Apataki - N Pass	146	24.4	?
Apataki - S Pass	146	25	?
Arutua	146	37	?
Faaite	145	21.5	?
Fakarava - N Pass	145	42	6
Fakarava - S Pass	145	27.8	5
Hao	141	0	6
Katiu	144	21	6
Kauehi	145	11	4
Makemo - NW Pass	143	58	4.1
Makemo - SE Pass	143	34	4.5
Manihi	146	4	6
Raraka	144	57.5	?
Raroia	142	27.5	?
Tahanea – Middle Pass	144	42	4
Toau - Anse Amyot	146	9	1.5
Toau - SE Pass	145	53	?

#### Wind Wave Current Factor Suggestions for a Wild Assed Guess at slack tide

- Add 1 kt for every day the wind has been blowing over 20 kts from a S or W component
- Add .5 kt for every day the wind has been blowing over 15 kts from a S or W component
- Add .5 kt for every 1/2-meter increment of southerly-component swell over 1.5 meters (ie 3 meter swell = +1.5 kt)
- Cap the Wind Wave factor at 1.5 times the Normal Max Current
- Subtract .5 kt for wide/deep passes and for each extra pass that an atoll has
- Note: These are “wild ass guesses”—not scientifically developed, so use them with a grain of salt!

The wind/wave factor is always\*\* outgoing current. So, it adds to the outgoing current and subtracts from the incoming current. It delays (or eliminates) the low slack time by an hour or two, and advances the high slack by an hour or two.

Example: At Anse Amyot, where we stayed long enough to observe conditions over several weather cycles, the peak calm weather current is about 1 knot. However, when the southerly swell picked up to 2.5 meters, and the wind to 15 knots, the current never turned to become incoming—we had a fairly steady outflow, even on a ‘rising tide’, of 2-2.5 knots!

### 1.4.3 Why NOT to Trust the Guestimator

**Migration – May 2023:** Here’s a phrase I often hear in the Tuamotus: “The Guestimator was 2 hours off!”

Or maybe it’s 2 or, 4, or 7. But there is almost always consternation and surprise.

For some reason sailors have completely forgotten the ‘Guess’ part of the Guestimator.

Gram did a great job creating the Guestimator with the information he had. However, Visions of Johanna (the boat Gram sailed on in the Tuamotus) transited through 6 passes on 4 different atolls (Hao, Makemo, Tahanea, Fakarava) over a period of just over a month (May 2010). That is not much time in an area that experiences a wide variety of conditions.

One example of this is the Guestimator’s note on Tahanea: “Tahanea does not seem to be particularly affected by high winds and seas and exhibits minimal “Wind/Wave” current from waves coming over the rim of the atoll in normal conditions.”

However, during the high SW swells that arrived at the atolls this past week (May 2023), the current was constantly outflowing from Tahanea for 3 days with speeds up to 8 knots. Of course, there was no way for Gram to know of this unless he was there when that type of event occurred, thus there is no way for the Guestimator to account for these conditions.

Gram certainly comes clean with the limitations of the Guestimator in this note on the Wind/Wave factor: “Note: At Fakarava South Pass, when the wind had been blowing hard out of the ESE, and the swell height was about 2-2.5 meters from the ESE we observed a much different current than our guestimator suggests -- incoming strong when our estimator said it should be outgoing.”

But one certainly can’t blame the Guestimator for getting it wrong. No scientifically-derived tool exists to estimate the current in passes. That’s because there are so many complex factors involved that change for each atoll: wind speed and direction, wave size and direction, swell size and direction, atmospheric pressure, oceanic currents, number of motus and passes, underwater topography, and, of course, the tides.

The Guestimator takes the high and low tides from one tide station, interpolates what the tide should be at each pass based upon its distance from that tide station, applies a standard delay to some of the stations, and goes from there.

The problem is that few people look under the hood of the Guestimator. 13 of the 22 passes have no slack delay – you need to put that in yourself based on observations. And the normal max currents are best-estimates. Most importantly, the mechanism for adding wind/wave effect is pretty blunt and is based on a very small sampling of real-world data.

**This is all to say that the Guestimator tends to be wrong about as much as it is right.** During calm weather conditions in some atolls, it can be spot on for long periods. For other atolls with no real-world

“The Guestimator  
was 3 hours off!”



slack delay, it will be very wrong. And during periods of high winds and/or seas, it can be completely useless.

Am I saying don't use the Guestimator? Not at all. I'm just saying don't ONLY use the Guestimator. And remember its limitations.

So what can you do? Here are some tips:

1. Use multiple resources to retrieve tidal information for your position: Guestimator, SHOM, Total Tides, OpenCPN, Navionics, tide apps, etc. Use them all and interpolate the tides for where you are based.
2. Contact every cruising boat that arrives or departs (call them on the VHF after they leave – you do keep your VHF on, don't you?) and keep a log of the time, current direction and strength. Remember that the tides progress 35-60 minutes each day (refer to the tidal information you sourced). That will give you the best idea of what will be happening when it's time for you to leave.
3. If you are anchored near the pass, go check it out yourself and add the information to your log. If you're diving the pass, you'll already know when slack is.
4. Ask local fishermen, remembering that their speedboats can handle very different conditions than our sailboats.
5. To make the Guestimator as accurate as possible, add observed slack delays – adjusting them as conditions change. To really improve accuracy, add your observed data (there's a place for it) and create your own graph.

Remember that the Guestimator isn't the only tool we have. The most important tool is our direct observations. No matter what the tide tables or the Guestimator predict, if it looks bad, don't go.

I'll close by saying what's great about the Guestimator: Gram made it and shared it. In the spirit of the cruising community, he put a lot of time and effort into making a tool that he freely shared. This was back in 2010 -- long before the era of websites displayed on hulls and booms, and YouTubers and Cruising Coaches working as hard as possible to create a brand and make a buck from cruisers. So, thank you, Gram!

**Soggy Paws – June 2011: \*\*Exception to the 'always outgoing' comment above:** After watching Tuamotus passes for a month and thinking we had them nailed, we spent one very windy period at Fakarava S Pass. The wind had been blowing about 25 kts from the ESE-ENE for over 24 hours, and a boat coming in the pass, expecting outgoing current based on the tidal information and corrections above, found ~4 kts INCOMING current. Our only guess at what was going on was that a strong E wind might blow all the water OUT of the lagoon over the low western reef, causing an incoming current when it normally would be outgoing. This is totally a guess on our part. This boat had a hairy ride into the atoll, but the current and the wind were going in the same direction, so no large standing waves.

**Bottom Line is OBSERVATION.** Do the best to estimate the slack time, get there a little early, sail in close, and wait patiently until you can see with the binoculars that the current is slack and there are no large standing waves in the pass. But remember that absolute slack is usually only necessary when you have a strong wind-against-current situation. A knot or three of current in light wind situations is usually no big deal, if your engine is working.

We went into Makemo at max outgoing tide once—we had the sails up (in light wind), the engine floored, and for a while, on the edge of the pass, we were only making ½ kt. This was fine because we had a strong engine and very mild wind/wave conditions.

Another tactic that is useful is to not go directly in the middle of the pass. At N Fakarava, for example, the pass is wide enough that you can stay toward the east side of the pass in 25 feet of water, and avoid the strongest current. Use your charts and your eyes to see where this makes sense.

**Jacaranda - June 2020:** If you think you are confused by trying to determine the slack water tide in the passes of the Tuamotus, you are not alone. It is a common topic amongst cruisers and one we have spent considerable time trying to figure out.

After spending more than a year cruising just the Tuamotus and visiting 11 atolls the subject of trying to determine slack water was something we gave a lot of thought to. If there was a slight swell and no wind, we could usually get through some of the smaller atolls by hugging the side of the pass. But if the trades were pumping and along with it a moderate swell the passes could be boisterous.

We tried the Guestimator, various tide tables from different countries including French SHOM tables, and often they would be off by hours.

We found the best advice if inside the atoll was to ask the local fisherman. Amazingly, they could just look at the reef and say "oh 2 hours it will be slack."

Bottom line is, we would use all various sources and then pick the one we thought was close. Our strategy was to get to the pass a couple of hours before we figured slack water. Go in close and have a look and then just wait. Sometimes, we would arrive to have it slack and other times we would have to wait. Patience man, patience. -- Jacaranda

#### **1.4.4 Official French Polynesia Tide Tables**

There is a French site that has tidal information for the North Pass at Fakarava and a few other sites in the Tuamotus (in French) [www.SHOM.fr](http://www.SHOM.fr) (direct link to tidal page is below). However, they do not account for the 'wind/wave factor' in their tide tables either.

[http://www.shom.fr/ann\\_marees/cgi-bin/predit\\_ext/choixp?opt=&zone=8&port=0&date=&heure=&portsel=map](http://www.shom.fr/ann_marees/cgi-bin/predit_ext/choixp?opt=&zone=8&port=0&date=&heure=&portsel=map)

**From Slipaway:** SHOM stands for "Service Hydrographique et Oceanographique de la Marine." We referenced it for tides at Makemo, Tahanea and both north and south passes of Fakarava. It did not have tide info for Manihi, but we got information on that atoll from Xavier (xavier.michel@mail.pf). The SHOM website is in French, but here are some directions for using it:

- On the SHOM home page, click on "Predictions de Marees"
- On the next page, click on "Listes alphabetiques" and then "Acces au predictions"
- On the map page, click on "Zone 8"
- On the next page, choose your location and then click on "Annuaire des marees (hauteur d'eau).
- In the "Nombre de jours" space, fill in the number of days for which you want tide info, and then click on "Calculer"
- When on the final page, if you want to choose another atoll, click on "Choisir un Autre Port"

#### **1.4.5 Other Tide Information Sources**

**Jacaranda – 2016:** Try to obtain a version of Total Tide program. Similar to WXTide32 but based on British tide tables. It has a number of atolls covered in the Tuamotus

#### **1.4.6 Marine Protected Areas Guide**

Marine Protected Areas Guide:

<http://www.ressources-marines.gov.pf/cdi/depliants-livrets-guides/>

If you can't find it there, the 2018 version can be found here:

<http://svsoggypaws.com/files/Marine%20Protected%20Areas%20in%20French%20Polynesia%202018.pdf>

**August 2018:** Since we transited through French Polynesia in 2010/2011, the government has made many changes to fishing and anchoring areas. The latest copy of the Marine Protected Areas, and the regulations surrounding them, are published in a guide downloadable from the internet. Sorry, I could not find an English version. Time to start practicing your French! – Soggy Paws

#### **1.4.7 Anchoring around Coral**

**Please float your chain when anchoring near coral. Remember, we are guests visiting this country, islands, atolls, and backyards of the lovely locals. We must take responsibility to protect the lagoons.**

Often lagoons are not clear and many times you are anchoring without knowing if there is coral on the bottom. Jacaranda has found the use of a fish finder to locate clear spots on the bottom invaluable in murky situations. We have a cheap one with the transducer stuck to the inside of the hull with silicon.

Each year sail boats cruising in French Polynesia get into trouble at anchor: They get trapped on lee shores after a shift in the wind direction and/or foul their anchor and/or chain in coral. The results are stressful maneuvers to get the anchor back up, bent bow rollers, and ruined or even ripped out windlass. Of course, the fragile coral structures get badly damaged with each of these messed up maneuvers as well.

It is **easy to avoid damage** to the coral and your boat if you:

- Anchor in conditions with **good visibility** (don't drop your anchor blindly)
- Try to find a **big, sandy spot** to drop your hook
- Anchor in **shallow** water...
  - ...where you can see the bottom clearly
  - ...usually fewer coral heads grow on sandy shelves, and
  - ...you only need a short chain.
- **Float the chain** so your boat can swing around in shifting winds without getting caught in coral heads
- Keep an eye on the **weather forecast** and move to a safe anchorage before the wind shifts

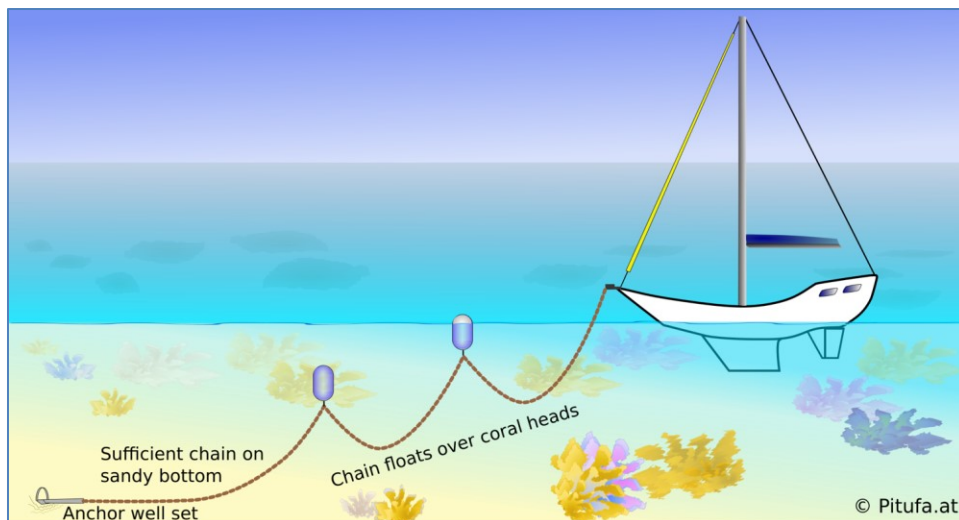
There are many ways to float your chain. Some people set their chain first, then pull back on it to ensure it is set properly. Once set, they will slowly pull up the chain to install the floats and then pull back again. Another way is listed below.

**Floating the chain is a simple procedure.** You just need:

- (3) or more medium-sized fenders or buoys
  - (3) or more carabiners that fit into your chain
1. Drop the anchor in the middle of the biggest sandy spot you can find,
  2. Pay out chain while reversing gently,
  3. Look around at the surrounding coral heads and estimate your swinging radius,
  4. Hook in the first fender/buoy before the chain could touch any of the coral heads,
  5. Pay out some more chain and set the anchor gently pulling in reverse,
  6. If the scope is still not sufficient, additional floats can be added followed by more chain.

**The general rule:**

The first float should be inserted at double the depth. If you drop the hook in 5 meters, put the first float on at 10 meters. Then add another float every 7-15 meters. If you have small floats/fenders, then add them every 7-10 meters. If you have a larger float/fender, then add them every 12-15 meters. The goal is to keep the chain off the surrounding coral heads.



For more information, visit [www.pitufa.at](http://www.pitufa.at). Enjoy French Polynesia!

If your chain does get wrapped...

If you are in a storm situation, it is critical to maintain some free chain. Boats have successfully weathered bad storm situations by going to a really long really strong snubber and/or letting out more chain as their chain gets wrapped (having a spare buoy rigged for this would make a lot of sense).

In some deep anchorages inside the lagoon, it can be difficult to see the bottom snorkeling, and therefore difficult to see what's going on when your chain seems stuck. It is USUALLY possible to unstick your chain without diving on it—patience and calm weather are helpful. A snorkeler in the water can be helpful. But this is a time where having a dive tank can be a big help.

**Another very useful resource about Floating Your Chain can be found here:**

<https://www.jacarandajourney.com/floatingyourchain>

**Not anchoring in coral...** After spending several seasons in the French Polynesia, we found that if you can make your way to the windward side of the island or atoll, there are usually spots where the sand has been pushed over the coral reef in big storms, and they make good sandy anchor spots in shallower water with only scattered heads.

**Dec. 2019:** We always anchored (EVERY TIME) with floats in the Tuamotus and were shocked and dismayed that others did not. At first, we would approach the boat anchored without floats and in a nice way suggest they could protect the coral and their anchor chain by floating. We even offered to show them how to do it. Within short order we stopped doing that due to the "Mind your own business" mentality.

We spent a year in the Tuamotus and I would say that less than 20% of the boats used floats. Now there are major anchoring restrictions underway in FP including Mo'orea, Raiatea, Bora Bora, Huahine, and one area in Fakarava that is totally off limits to cruisers--all partially due to the destruction of coral by cruisers over the years.

For example, we anchored in the S pass at Fakarava numerous times and the majority of boats did NOT use floats and the bottom is completely destroyed. It made us sick and we totally understand why the locals are pissed off at the yachts because we are destroying their backyards. – Jacaranda

#### **1.4.8 Using Out-Island Moorings**

**USE EXTREME CARE** when using the moorings in N & S Fakarava, Kauehi, and Aratika. The moorings were put in a few years ago by the environment service and no service has been done since. These moorings are now about 3+ years old and with no maintenance it's like playing Russian Roulette.

**NEVER ever assume that a mooring is good without inspecting it.  
Boats are wrecked every year while crossing the Pacific due to trusting a mooring.**

A mooring that is not properly inspected and revamped every 6 months can be very dangerous for your boat. NONE of the moorings you will find in the South Pacific are inspected and revamped every 6 months. So, inspect it yourself! Some things to look for:

- Inspect the loop for signs of chafe. Inspect the length of line to make sure that the line is of appropriate strength for your boat, and that the line, the chain, the shackles, and the mooring are of appropriate strength/size for your boat.
- Inspect the chain, especially if the chain hangs in the sand. As the mooring ball “dances”, the chain rubs in the sand, resulting in very thin links.
- Inspect the connection to whatever is on the bottom... some are chain wrapped around a massive (dead) coral head. Some are concrete blocks with re-bar loops cast into the concrete (the rebar rusts and can go bad).
- If you have a concrete block on the bottom, know the dimensions of that concrete block, and remember that concrete is half as heavy in water as it is in air (so a 500 lb block is only 250 lbs underwater). Do not assume that the islander who set up that mooring understands just how big a concrete block is required to properly moor a 45 ft full-keel cruising boat in a 35-knot squall, with 6 ft waves lifting the bow.

#### **Proper Way to Connect to a Mooring**

The proper way to connect to a single-loop mooring is to run two lines, one from each bow cleat. Each line should go from the cleat, through the loop, and back to the same cleat. This provides redundancy, and eliminates the “sawing” problem.

Some moorings are short; if under full load the line goes into the water steeper than 33 degrees (1 down for 2 forward), extend it with your own lines. A near vertical mooring will rip off, even with a small boat. Don't blame the mooring when that happens.

The fundamental problem is, of course, that every time someone drops an anchor in those areas, a few years of coral growth gets destroyed; so, advising cruisers not to use moorings will quickly ruin those wonderful places.

#### **Never Connect to a Mooring with a Single Line:**

DO NOT run a single line from one bow cleat to another, through the mooring loop. This is a recipe for disaster! As your boat swings back and forth, this will saw on the loop, severely damaging it. In strong gusty wind, you can saw through a 1-inch 3-strand line in a couple of hours. We pulled one boat off the rocks, and heard of another boat whose boat was a total loss due to sawing through the loop. Even in light winds, you are damaging the loop (i.e. not being a good neighbor). Don't be lazy!

**May 2019:** In mid-April a couple of divers arrived from Papeete to inspect / service the moorings at both Roatava and the S pass at Fakarava. In Roatava the 3 public moorings (white floats see Kokopeli waypoints in Fakarava section) were inspected, but the other 4 moorings that had broken free in the past few years were not renewed. – Jacaranda

**September 2018:** The moorings in Fakarava at the village and the south pass are NOT maintained. A 38' sailboat had a mooring break (2018) at the south pass and ended up on the reef causing extensive damage. – Jacaranda

**2017** a mooring broke off the village of Rotoava and the vessel ended up on the rocks. There are fewer moorings at the village of Rotoava & the S Pass now because mooring have parted and not been replaced.

#### **1.4.9 Navigation in Areas with Coral**

**May 2018:** Though we found both the CMAP (CM93 v2) and Garmin charts to be fairly accurate in French Polynesia (not so everywhere, however), your ability to explore coral-laced atolls is greatly enhanced by acquiring high-resolution satellite images.

There are a number of sources of satellite charting/imagery for French Polynesia.

##### **1.4.9.1 KAPS and mbtiles (used by charting programs like OpenCPN)**

<a href="#">Migration's Charts</a>	Pacific Mexico, French Poly, Pitcairn Island, Easter Island mbtiles 2020
<a href="#">Zen Again's Charts</a>	Pacific Ocean, SE Asia, Crossing to S Africa, S Atlantic, Brazil
<a href="#">Soggy Paws' Charts</a>	Pacific Ocean, SE Asia, Red Sea
<a href="#">Jacaranda's Charts</a>	French Polynesia
<a href="#">Valhalla's Charts</a>	SE Asia and Western Pacific
<a href="#">Ocelot's Charts</a>	SE Asia, Western Pacific, and Indian Ocean

**Make Your Own:** You can make your own, look for the Sat2Chart program here:

<http://gdayii.ca>

There is a Facebook Group called GE2Kap that provides support for Sat2Chart (formerly GE2KAP).

Best place to download a copy of SAS Planet is here:

<http://gdayii.ca/Downloads/Sasplanet.zip> This is not an installer... just unzip to a convenient folder and go. This version is set up to work well with Sat2Chart.

OpenCPN is a free fully functional navigation program, downloadable from <http://opencpn.org> It runs on Windows 7-11, many flavors of Linux and Raspberry Pi, and Apple Macs (but not iDevices).

##### **1.4.9.2 iDevices**

OpenCPN doesn't run on iPads and iPhones due to their proprietary architecture/non-open source attitude. Here are some satellite navigation options for iDevices.

**Ovital** Maps used to be the most-recommended for iPads/iPhones, but the Apple Store gutted this program in about 2019. If you have it, and have maps you want to keep, don't hook your iPad up to the internet, or your maps will go away!

The latest recommended choice is **Guru Maps**.

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.bodunov.galileo>

You get one free week and then can buy the Pro version for \$10 per year. Cheaper to start with the free version than buy the Pro outright, but I heard that maps downloaded for the free version have to be re-downloaded for the Pro version. You can add map types from here: <https://ms.gurumaps.app/>

Another often recommended satellite charting app is **Zulu Offshore**:  
<https://apps.apple.com/id/app/zulu-offshore/id1522412216>

#### **1.4.9.3 Android**

The most-recommended solution (besides OpenCPN on Android) is **All in One Offline Maps**:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=net.psyberia.offlinemaps>

Another often recommended choice is **Guru Maps**.

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.bodunov.galileo>

You get one free week and then can buy the Pro version for \$10 per year. Cheaper to start with the free version than buy the Pro outright, but I heard that maps downloaded for the free version have to be re-downloaded for the Pro version. You can add map types from here: <https://ms.gurumaps.app/>

And a third is **Alpine Quest**: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=psyberia.alpinequest.full>

#### **1.4.9.4 Windows**

OpenCPN, of course (with added maps). <http://opencpn.org> The benefit of OpenCPN is the widely available old worldwide CMAP chart set. Can download free from Valhalla's site (see chart source links above).

SAS Planet: <http://sasgis.org> is a good alternative for Windows users. But SAS is NOT a navigation program. OpenCPN is.

Help for SasPlanet / GE2KAP / Sat2Chart can be found on the Facebook Group "GE2KAP" – Soggy Paws

### **1.5 Weather**

Thanks to the efforts of Dave Vogel on s/v Perigee, the weather section has been completely updated and made its own Compendium, reducing the amount of redundant information we have to keep up to date.

Please download the full document here: <http://svsoggyaws.com/files/#frpoly>

### **1.6 Yachtsmen Services**

#### **1.6.1 Cooking Gas (Propane/Butane)**

**Cost:** The cost of propane/butane is a set price in FP. Deposit on the bottle is 3000F Cost of the gas is 2900F.

You can purchase French cooking gas tanks from either of the magasins (see Provisions section). However, there are no services that will refill American cooking gas tanks in the Tuamotus.

You must obtain a fitting for your tank before arriving in FP. The fitting either male or female that connects to your tank. They are not available here. Another cruiser may be able to loan a fitting but it is best to bring one.

Download "[Refilling Your Propane Tanks in French Polynesia](#)" as it is a very helpful instructional document, with photos, on how to fill your American propane tanks in French Polynesia. Fill your tanks 100% full every time using this method.

[Tahiti Cruiser's Guide](#) has a list of suppliers in French Poly that fill non-French tanks (outside of Gambier) , see the “propane” section.

**Feb 2021:** We have read numerous reports about the difficulties in filling gas bottles in all of the compendiums. So, if you plan to spend extended periods of time in the south pacific, we recommend that you carry your own equipment to gravity fill your tanks from a local bottle. We use the GasBoat 4018 Go-anywhere Adaptor Kit from [www.whayward.com](http://www.whayward.com), which provides connectivity to any gas bottle worldwide. It's not cheap to buy but will save you lots of money in the long term. We pay a deposit for a local gas bottle which we keep for 24 hours to gravity fill our bottles and then return. – Ari B

### Cooking Gas Suppliers

Ahe	Apataki	Fakarava	Hao	Kauehi	Makemo	Rairoa	Tikehau
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### 1.6.2 Fuel (Diesel/Gasoline)

See individual atoll section for specifics on diesel and gasoline options in those areas.

Remember when inquiring about diesel and gasoline that diesel, in French, is called ‘gazoil’ and gasoline is called ‘essence’ (eh sans). Make sure you know what you are asking for!

The [Tahiti Cruising Guide](#) has a current list of suppliers that honor duty-free certificates, see “Diesel/Gas” section.

#### Fuel Suppliers:

The following atolls offer fuel in small quantities. Larger quantities can be purchased from supply ships where indicated under each atoll.

Atolls with “\*\*” only have limited supplies purchased from a magasin or local.

Fakarava has an actual fuel station where you can dock the big boat.

Amanu **	Ahe **	Apataki **	<b>Fakarava</b>	<b>Hao</b>	Kauehi **
Makemo **	Manihi **	Raroia **	<b>Rangiroa</b>	Tikehau **	

Supply ship will sometimes sell 200-liter drums, but will not always honor the duty-free certificate.

The supply ship only sells diesel in 200-liter drums (55 gallons). You must bring your jerry cans to the dock and use the pump to fill your jerry cans. Sometimes you can get multiple boats to go in on one drum. The supply ship does not honor the duty-free certificate and only accepts local currency (XPF). Gasoline usually has to be pre-ordered. You need to prepay with the ships dock master. Same guy you pay for veggies & other supplies.

#### Supply Ships that Deliver Fuel

There are three cargo ships that deliver fuel/goods to the Tuamotu atolls. You can pre-order 200-liter drums of diesel and gasoline, 2-stroke oil, propane, etc... Usually one of the ships delivers to the Tuamotus weekly.

**Navette Cobia** +689 40 43 36 43. Their schedule for the central Tuamotus is posted on their Facebook page [@navette cobia](#).

**Maris Stella** +689 89 40 06 10, +689 40 43 03 73, and +689 40 06 10 (SMS), [maris-stella@mail.pf](mailto:maris-stella@mail.pf) . Their schedule for most of the atolls (even though it is less frequent) is posted on their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/SXMS.3ET4/> Place the order before they leave Tahiti and it will be



delivered to you. They might not acknowledge your text, but your order will arrive if you place it before it leaves Tahiti.

**Dory** +689 40 42 30 55 does weekly visits to the NW Tuamotus.

### **1.6.2.1 Duty Free Fuel**

Duty free fuel is available to foreign boats in French Polynesia. There is a form to apply for Duty Free fuel and the form must be processed in Papeete. Having an agent who can do the paperwork for you before you arrive in Tahiti, means that you can buy duty-free fuel while still in the French Polynesia before arriving in Tahiti. Most agents' clearance packages include a duty-free fuel certificate. The certificate is good for 6-months. You can renew it within 2 weeks of your expiry date.

Fakarava North gas station will accept duty free fuel certificates.

The [Tahiti Cruiser's Guide](#) has a current list of suppliers that honor the duty-free fuel certificate as well as the lat/long location of the government office where get your certificate in Tahiti.

### **1.6.3 Trash & Recycling**

Most atolls have proper trash receptacles that you can utilize. Stop by Le Mairie (the Mayor's office) in each atoll to pay for your trash disposal.

**Recycling:** Keep in mind that NO atolls have recycling. They may have separate bins for recycling, but they all go to the same dump. If you can, please only dispose of proper trash and save all recycling (glass, plastic, cans) for the Societies where they can recycle properly."

**Uninhabited Atolls:** There are a few atolls that are uninhabited or do not have a proper trash disposal system. Please be respectful of these beautiful atolls. Try to wait to dispose of your trash properly at an inhabited atoll.

**Burning Trash:** If you are going to burn your trash on uninhabited atolls please return after the fire is out to remove any noncombustible articles or do not burn them in the first place. Remember these motus are owned by someone and you are burning your garbage in someone's back yard. This is someone's property and should be left the way you found it.

### **1.6.4 Water**

See individual atoll section for specifics on water options in those areas.

**2010 verified 2019:** Most of the fresh water in the Tuamotus comes from rainwater—all the houses have tin roofs with gutters leading to cisterns (usually large black plastic tubs). This supplies the water to each house. Many houses have more than one roof and more than one cistern.

A few towns also have water collection systems for the town, and some public faucet near the waterfront. But you should always ask someone for permission, and for information about whether the water is designed to be drinking water.

- In N Fakarava, the town has water near the concrete harbor
- In Hao at the main wharf next to Le Mairie
- In Makemo, the town has water near the concrete pier
- In Toau, at Anse Amyot, Valentine said they normally had plenty of water to share some with cruisers in need of water.

If you need a little water, most people I'm sure would share some water with you. However, in a really dry period, when you are desperate for water, the locals may also be desperate for water... So, it would

be best for you to collect rain water when you can, and fill up in small increments as you go along. – Soggy Paws

## 1.7 General Services

### 1.7.1 Air Tahiti

Air Tahiti's main office is located on Rue Edouard Ahnne, Papeete, Tahiti.

+689 40 47 44 00. <http://airtahiti.com>. Hours: Mon-Fri: 0800-1700 and Sat 0800-1100.

From Marina Papeete, turn left on main road, turn right at Rue du 22 September 1914 (street by Papeete Market) and Air Tahiti will be on the corner of Rue du 22 September 1914 and Rue du Pere Collette.

If you are a resident and/or have a long stay visa (carte de sejour) and are over the age of 60 years old, you are eligible for a Carte Marama which will give you up to 50% off all Air Tahiti flights (inter-island flights, not Air Tahiti Nui international flights). You must be a resident (holder of carte de sejour), be over 60 years of age. Bring your passport (not a driver's license), an extra passport size photo, local phone number, local address (we used Marina Papeete). Go upstairs, fill out the Carte Marama form, pay 2500xpf and you will walk out with the card that can be used immediately. Discount only applies to card holder.

### 1.7.2 Bank / ATMs (Money)

The normal currency in the Tuamotus is the French Polynesia Franc, usually abbreviated CFP or XPF. In Feb. 2021, the exchange rate was 92 CFP/XPF per 1 US dollar (in Dec. 2020 it was 102/xpf to 1 US dollar). The post office will give a 100/1 exchange, so a 500-CFP is about \$5.00 USD, regardless what the actual exchange rate may be at the time.

Most Post Offices will exchange money in atolls where there are no banks or ATMs. Like most places, some local businesses will accept USD, but the exchange rate may be arbitrary. Very few places accept credit cards.

See section on individual atolls for banks and ATMs.

Fakarava	Makemo	Rangiroa
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### General Information on Money

If you are going to stay in the Tuamotus for very long, especially if you think you will need to buy fuel in any quantity, bring PLENTY of cash—USD, Euros, or CFP. Some magasins (markets) will accept credit cards with a minimum purchase. The artisan market and the supply ship accept local currency only (no credit cards). Remember that diesel is about \$5.50/gallon and gasoline \$6.00. A beer in a store is around \$3 EACH. A typical meal ashore runs from \$11 to \$35. It's pricey.

If you are interested in **opening a French Polynesia OPT bank account**, be sure to download "Opening a Bank Account in French Polynesia" from Jacaranda at

<https://www.jacarandajourney.com/openingabankaccount>. If you have an OPT account you can withdrawal and transfer money.

### **1.7.3 Marine Supplies (Boat Parts)**

There are no marine stores in the Tuamotus. However, several atolls have small hardware stores that may carry a few boat parts for the local pangas. Critical items can be shipped in from Tahiti. The locations below can assist you with shipments.

#### **Boat Part Suppliers / Marine**

- Apataki Carneage Boat Yard (haul out facility)
- Fakarava Yacht Services (shipped in from Tahiti)

### **1.7.4 Importing Parts Duty-Free**

For updates on this topic download the [Tahiti Cruiser's Guide](#).

Download "Shipping and Transporting items into French Polynesia". Latest information on process. <https://www.jacarandajourney.com/shippingitems>.

The basic rules for bringing in goods from outside of French Polynesia is as follows:

If you order & ship without using "Yacht in Transit" you can bring in goods less than 20,000xpf without any tax. For shipments like these, do not label the goods Yacht in Transit.

From values 20.000xpf to 50.000xpf the tax is 20% for EU / 30% rest of the world. You are taxed accordingly based on the total amount.

Goods valued over 50.000xpf, you must go thru custom broker, and the tax is around 45% of value.

If you order & ship as a "Yacht in Transit" you are required to use a CB at the cost of approximately 15,000xpf. You will not be required to pay duty (tax).

Total amount includes cost of item + shipping + tax.

The French Polynesia Customs FAQ's at this line: this is in French but translates well with Google Translate:

<http://www.polynesie-francaise.pref.gouv.fr/Douanes/Section-Particuliers/Questions-frequentes>

**March 2017:** The vendors in Pape'ete are very familiar with shipping parts all over French Polynesia. You can order the part and have it on the next ship. Shipping parts to the islands is very cheap. We had a solar panel shipped from Papeete to Marquesas and it cost < 1000f. – Jacaranda

**March 2017:** Many items are now available in Papeete, and the online guide was designed as a reference to finding items or services. Replacement of broken parts for a foreign yacht is duty free but two customs applications are required--one when the item arrives, and another when the yacht leaves FP. This "duty free" exemption does not apply to any new item on your vessel--only replacement parts; therefore, you need to be ready to prove "replacement" when you leave FP (although I doubt this is rigorously enforced).

We have heard of a vessel having to physically destroy their old sails in front of a customs agent before getting their new sails duty-free. The double customs applications also doubles the charges of the customs brokerage. Mary Ann II was charged 6,000xpf times two for an 800 USA dollar order.

You are allowed to receive goods valued up to \$300 duty free without requiring an application to customs (this figure includes shipping cost.)

**Sept. 2013:** Spare parts/equipment required to repair a vessel under the temporary admission status ("admission temporaire"), may be imported and cleared through customs without paying customs dues. However, since July 2013, these goods must be declared for export when you check out of French Polynesia.

Yachts owners/skippers can import/export goods by themselves, however there is a lot of paperwork involved and the process can be "tricky". Assistance of a yacht agent can be very helpful (which also includes extra services like collecting the shipment at the port/airport and arranging final delivery to the yacht). If the total of the shipment is over 350 Euros you are now required to have an agent under the new law.

Fees involved for bringing in spare parts are those charged by the customs broker (for the 2 Customs declarations / paperwork for "temporary admission" and then "final exportation) and NOT for Customs duties. These fees depend on the shipment's CIF value (goods value + insurance+ freight). On average, fees invoiced by the customs broker for each declaration are between 10 and 25.000 CFP/XPF depending on the CIF value (1 Euro = 119,33 CFP/XPF, 1 USD is currently 100 CFP/XPF). DHL can be both your shipper and agent. – Noonsite

### **1.7.5 Shipping Items In or Out**

**Jan. 2021:** – Jacaranda has compiled a lot of useful information on shipping and transporting items into French Polynesia. Visit <https://www.jacarandajourney.com/shippingitems>.

Express Shipping OUT of French Polynesia (services and phone numbers):

- DHL Express: +689 40 83 73 72
- UPS: +689 40 54 57 27
- FedEx Global Air: +689 40 45 36 45

#### **Island Cargo Support Corporate Office**

12900 Simms Ave, Hawthorne, CA 90250, USA  
90250

888.500.2541 Toll free USA

310.693.8348

310.684.3831 Fax

[lax@icargosupport.com](mailto:lax@icargosupport.com)

Katherine Warth – [Katherine.warth@icargosupport.com](mailto:Katherine.warth@icargosupport.com)

#### **Island Cargo Freight Terminal**

12900 Simms Ave, Hawthorne, CA

888.500.2541 Toll Free

[team@icargosupport.com](mailto:team@icargosupport.com)

#### **ECU Worldwide**

Address: ECU LAX

c/o STG Logistics

2201 E. Carson Street

Carson, CA 90810

Contact: Risa Katoa

[katrinajones@ecuworldwide.us](mailto:katrinajones@ecuworldwide.us)

[gcabrera@ecuworldwide.us](mailto:gcabrera@ecuworldwide.us)

**Jan 2021:** I have had *terrible* customer service from ECU and Risa. Repeated phone calls have gone unanswered along with emails. – Jacaranda

Some other people have seen a lack of response with ECU Worldwide prior to Risa Katoa joining the team.

Hazardous materials are limited on the ship. If you are shipping something that is considered hazardous it may get bumped to another ship due to the limitation. There is a hazard fee associated with hazardous items. Be sure to read the section on what is required by the shipped when sending hazardous materials. Details can be found <https://www.jacarandajourney.com/shippingitems>.

**Gondrand** (Shipping Agent)

+689 40 54 31 54 – <https://www.gondrand.fr>, or [compta.1ppt@gondrand.pf](mailto:compta.1ppt@gondrand.pf)

Contact: Heiarii-Vahine Rehia - [Logistics.1ppt@gondrand.pf](mailto:Logistics.1ppt@gondrand.pf) or James at [logistics.2ppt@gondrand.pf](mailto:logistics.2ppt@gondrand.pf).

You need to provide passport, ship documentation, and check in documentation. Email all invoices of what is arriving and the Bill of Lading (that you receive from ECU). Gondrand is less responsive, but they are on top of it all and will get in touch when they need to.

**Cost:** Depends on the cost of the shipment. They requested cash for payment (only). One cruiser reported their entire flat of goods cost 35000xpf for all associated fees on one shipment.

**Customs:** It can take between 1-14 days to clear packages in and out of customs.

**DGX Shipping Company** (Dependable Global Express)

**DGX is no longer servicing French Polynesia (as of Feb. 2021).**

<https://www.dgxglobal.com> or [intlrates@dgxglobal.com](mailto:intlrates@dgxglobal.com)

+1 888.488.4888 or +1 310.669.8888

Reyna Tausinga contact for coordinator – [reyna.tausinga@dgxglobal.com](mailto:reyna.tausinga@dgxglobal.com)

**Cost:** \$172 per cubic meter. Weight does not matter at all – price based on cubic meter.

Select the date of your shipment based on the ship's schedule. Departs about every 2 weeks.

Reyna is very responsive and will facilitate and coordinate the shipping address and consolidation.

**1.7.6 Flying Stuff in on Air Tahiti**

**Jan. 2020:** If you have large luggage or excess luggage and are flying from Tahiti to another FP island, you can try to check your luggage with Air Tahiti. However, if they say it is over the weight limit or excess bag limit, don't worry because you can check it as freight for cheap through Air Tahiti Freight. At the PPT airport, just past McDonalds is Air Tahiti Freight. They will put your luggage on the same flight or next flight and fly it to your destination for much less than excess baggage. – Sugar Shack

**April 2019:** We were concerned because we had 80 pounds of luggage over what we initially paid for on our flight from Tahiti to Raiatea. Air Tahiti was very accommodating. We didn't need to take it to Air Tahiti Cargo as I feared, risking the possibility of it not arriving on our flight with us. Instead, we were allowed to check it with our flight and just had to pay an extra \$56. – Cool Change

**1.7.7 Shipping Items between Islands and Archipelagos**

There are several ways to ship items / packages between the outer islands and Tahiti. You can either place them on the supply boat or you can send them on Air Tahiti.

**Air Tahiti**

Go to the Air Tahiti office. Bring your package and identification. They will put your package on the next flight. You have to make arrangements for someone in Tahiti to pick up your parcel (usually the recipient). The price will be depending on the weight and size of the parcel.

**Supply Ship**

Most supply ships will accept packages to/from Tahiti. Each ship sets up a small booth (where you pay for your fuel, propane, etc...). The booth attendant will weigh your package, set the price, and take your package for the ship to bring to Tahiti. This process takes longer to arrive to Tahiti but it is less expensive.

Picking up packages sent to the outer islands via the supply ship is rather easy. Once your package is on the ship, you retrieve it at the dock. At the booth there will be two trays filled with shipping invoices. Find your shipping invoice. This document will tell you which container your parcel is located. Then you

wait until that container is unloaded. The workers will call out your name as the parcel is unloaded. Frozen goods are unloaded last.

### **Using an Agent**

You can have Gondrand assist you with inter-island shipping and/or have items shipped directly to them to forward to you at an outer island. They will do the customs (pay upfront), hold your package if necessary, then forward it to you.

**Gondrand** (Shipping Agent)

+689 40 54 31 54 – <https://www.gondrand.fr>, or [compta.1ppt@gondrand.pf](mailto:compta.1ppt@gondrand.pf)

Contact: James at [logistics.2ppt@gondrand.pf](mailto:logistics.2ppt@gondrand.pf)

### **Caddy Express**

James - +689 89 65 69 03 (WhatsApp and phone) can collect packages or shop for you in Papeete, Tahiti and then forward your items to you in the outer island. He speaks English and is reasonably priced.

**2021:** The vendors in Papeete are very familiar with shipping parts all over French Polynesia. You can order the part and have it on the next ship. Shipping parts to the islands is very cheap. We had a solar panel shipped from Papeete to Marquesas and it cost < 1000f. – Jacaranda

### **1.7.8 Concierge Services (Delivery from Tahiti to outer Islands)**

There are several concierge services that can pick up marine parts, fresh goods, and other supplies in Tahiti and either ship or fly your supplies to you in the outer islands. It could cost you less and include higher quality, and more diverse options. You can also contact a few of the local shops in Papeete and have them deliver/ship items to you in the outer islands. If you are looking for staples, it is less expensive to buy those in the outer islands. Staples would include subsidized items and simple imported goods like flour, sugar, rice, beans, etc...

**Placing an order with a coursier (personal shopper):** Organize your shopping list by shop. For example, a list for Carrefour, a list for Papeete Market, a list for a marine store. Contact your coursier of choice, organize payment (usually by bank transfer), and await your delivery by supply ship or air freight.

#### **1.7.8.1 Coursier (Personal Shoppers)**

All coursiers will send your goods to you anywhere in French Polynesia via cargo (much less expensive) or by Air Tahiti freight (\$\$ per kilo and only to islands/atolls with an airport). Refrigerator and freezer freight is normally available with all options (unless they are broken).

**Juliette** can be reached at [rairoajuju@yahoo.fr](mailto:rairoajuju@yahoo.fr). She charges 2000xpf (\$20 USD) per shopping mission (per shop you ask her to go to) plus freight costs. It is less expensive per shop if you have her go to multiple stores. She will even go to the Papeete market early Sunday morning to buy local organic veggies and put it in refrigerated freight on a cargo ship Monday morning.

**Est. Informatique** lists their products at [www.est-info.pf](http://www.est-info.pf). You have to arrange for payment and schedule according to the supply ship.

**HM Coursier** +689 46 82 82 and [hmccoursier@gmail.com](mailto:hmccoursier@gmail.com). Very professional, organized and responsive. Usually the same price as Juliette.

**Caddy Xpress** +689 89 65 69 03 (Signal/WhatsApp) ask for Thomas. Will assist with shopping and shipping/collecting packages and transport to outer islands. He is reasonable with his prices and is very helpful, fast in responses, has Revolut (easy to pay) and speaks English.

### **1.7.8.2 Stores that Deliver to Cargo Ships**

There are a number of businesses in Tahiti that supply products, food, items to individuals in the outer islands. See the "[Tahiti Cruisers Guide](#)" under Food Distributor / Buyer.

With any of these options, they will send your goods to you anywhere in FP via cargo (much less expensive) or Air Tahiti (\$\$ per kg). Refrigerator and freezer freight normally available with all options (unless it is broken)

**Polynesia Trading** +689 40 45 62 63 or [polynesiatrading@loana@gmail.com](mailto:polynesiatrading@loana@gmail.com). They speak English and have a Facebook page (@Polynesia Trading). Their FB page has photos of their inventory and prices (like online shopping). This is a big box store like "Costco" but with no membership and a smaller variety. They are very responsive during business hours. They can deliver to the cargo ship and will charge freight charges.

**Maxi Tahiti** can be reached at [maxitahiti@mail.pf](mailto:maxitahiti@mail.pf) or on their Facebook page which is @Maxi Tahiti. They offer similar products and pricing as Polynesia Trading as they are a big box store as well.

### **1.7.8.3 Online Delivery Service to Outer Islands**

**Sipac:** +689 87 72 80 70 and +689 40 54 05 50. Website: [www.sipac.pf](http://www.sipac.pf) or email [ressourceshumaines@sipac.pf](mailto:ressourceshumaines@sipac.pf). Boat schedule: [www.sipac.pf/horaires-des-bateaux](http://www.sipac.pf/horaires-des-bateaux). This is an online delivery service where you select your items, pay by credit card, and have it all delivered to you in the outer islands. They sell, food, fruits, vegetables, liquor, wine, personal hygiene, etc...Their website lists items alphabetical and not by category so you do have to hunt and peck to find your items. See supply ships (below) to coordinate with their schedule.

**Feb 2021:** We ordered a delivery online via [www.sipac.pf](http://www.sipac.pf). The actual process of ordering was quite difficult not because of the website which is very good, but due to poor wifi. Make sure you have a good connection when you proceed to the payment page because if it fails you will lose your basket and have to start again. You will receive email confirmation of your order and when the ship arrives you can collect the paperwork from a tray next to the mobile ship office and this will indicate which containers your goods are in. When the container is opened, they will call out names for each package. This can take quite a long time especially if you order frozen goods which gets opened last. The quality and pricing of the goods including fruit and vegetables was very good. Several cruisers ordered from Sipac and all of us received our orders as expected. –Ari B

**Jan. 2021:** Online shopping for the outer islands and archipelagos in French Polynesia [www.sipac.pf](http://www.sipac.pf). Our experience of this online shopping business, who are based in Tahiti, was relatively straightforward. They sell a range of products including, fruit and veg, refrigerated and frozen goods, household cleaning products plus your usual tins, packets and dried foods. We saw wine and rum but no beer.

The site is in French. We found it fairly logical to navigate with a little bit of translation help from Google. Create an account first. The site details which boats are delivering to which islands. Pick your boat and the site will tell you the last date and time for online orders to ensure your 'shopping' gets picked and packed for the boat. The freight cost is based on the volume of the goods you buy.

When shopping you can come off the site and go back in another day and your chosen items should stay in the virtual basket. We did have a glitch paying but that was due to a very thin data connection here in the Gambiers, not Sipac's fault. Our card payment timed out which meant our shopping basket disappeared into the ether and we had to start again. We spoke to a very helpful Sipac chap in Tahiti who spoke English who helped us sort this out. Other cruisers we know using the site didn't have this problem, a frustration of thin comms. After paying we received an emailed receipt with confirmation of our order. Today our shopping arrived on the Taporo 8. Our chilled goods and fruit and veggies came out

of refrigerated containers, and were in good shape. General goods were in a regular container and all fine too. – Grace of Longstone

#### **1.7.8.4 Supply Ship Schedules and Contact Info**

Le Mairie (the mayor's office) usually has the supply ship schedule posted outside the office.

For the latest information and contact details visit DPAM at <https://www.service-public.pf/dpam/transport-inter-insulaire/les-avis-de-depart-des-navires-de-commerce-en-partance-de-tahiti-vers-les-archipels-3-2/>

It is always a good idea to know when the supply ship arrives so you can take advantage of buying diesel, gasoline, cheaper beer by the case, and fresh produce.

There are several cargo ships that deliver goods to the Tuamotu atolls. You can pre-order 200-liter drums of diesel and gasoline, 2-stroke oil, propane, etc... Usually one of the ships delivers to the Tuamotus each week.

**Navette Cobia** +689 40 43 36 43 [cobia@mail.pf](mailto:cobia@mail.pf). Their schedule for the central Tuamotus is posted on their Facebook page @navette cobia.

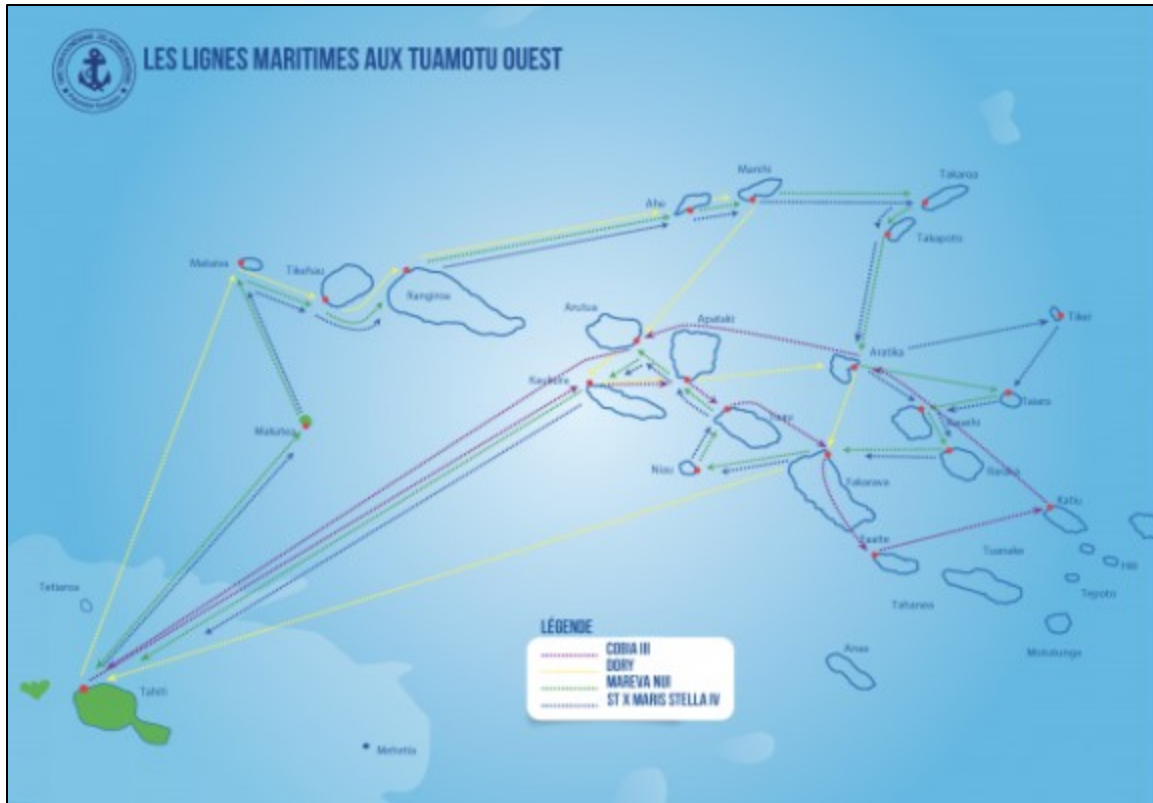
**Maris Stella** +689 89 40 06 10 and +689 40 42 23 58 (SMS) and [maris-stella@mail.pf](mailto:maris-stella@mail.pf). Their schedule for most of the atolls (even though it is less frequent) is posted on their Facebook page @maris stella. They will set up a food shop with fresh veggies and fruit at the dock when they visit most islands. You can use the above number to order food, including icecream. Place the order before they leave Tahiti and it will be delivered to you. They probably won't acknowledge your text, but your order will arrive if you place it before it leaves Tahiti.

**Dory** +689 40 42 30 55 and [dory@mail.pf](mailto:dory@mail.pf) does weekly visits to the NW Tuamotus.

**Mareva Nui** +689 40 42 25 53 and [contact@marevanui.pf](mailto:contact@marevanui.pf) (is listed as a supply ship visiting the Tuamotus, but we have not seen it in our travels).

#### **Route for Supply Ships**





**Jan.2021:** We preordered some veggies by texting the Maris Stella (no acknowledgement from them) and got potatoes, onions, carrots, apples and eggs. It was a slightly uncomfortable experience as we realized that our order wasn't fulfilled using produce brought in addition to the usual amount of produce brought by the supply ship. The boat staff weighed out our orders then what was left was available to the locals. Having taken kilos of produce that would have been available for locals to buy, we'd recommend coming as stocked up as you can. We had assumed that pre ordering would mean that we were not competing with the locals for fresh produce but the reality was that pre ordering created a worse situation. And as long as the Maris Stella continues to operate this way, we would caution against pre ordering from the ship. Anecdotally, we have since heard that this has also happened in Rarioia with produce ordered through the magasin. – Grace of Longstone

### 1.7.9 Medical & Prescriptions

See individual atoll sections for more details on medical facilities and doctors. Most of the larger atolls will have a clinic with a nurse. Physicians will fly in every 6-7 weeks to treat the local population.

The [Tahiti Cruisers Guide](#) has a detailed list of physicians, specialists, and hospitals in Papeete and other locations in the outer islands.

#### Obtaining Medicine and Prescription Drugs

**2017:** Patrick Ly ([pharmaciedetiarei@mail.pf](mailto:pharmaciedetiarei@mail.pf) +689 87 79 16 93) runs his own pharmacy in northern Tahiti, but is available to all of French Polynesia via email, text, phone, and Skype. He speaks English well and is willing to ship medications anywhere in FP. He understands cruisers' needs to order large volumes and is very helpful in finding alternatives. If he can't provide a specific solution, he will say so. – Kandu

### **1.7.10 Provisions (Groceries)**

See individual atoll section for specifics on magasins, markets, and fresh produce options in those areas. Most atolls with villages will have some type of magasin.

There are a number of items that are “red tagged” which means they are subsidized by the government. They are usually “staples” and are offered at a significant discount - so keep an eye out for them and save!

**Staples...**flour, milk, eggs, butter, rice, canned food, etc are available in almost magasin. But veggies get very difficult to find, especially if the supply ship hasn't been in recently. Locals grow fresh fruit and vegetables and will usually sell them to you with a smile. If you see fresh veggies, buy them immediately--they may not be there when you're ready to re-provision.

**Meats:** are located in large, top-loading white freezers. Don't be shy to dig through the freezer to find what you want. Also ask—many smaller stores have more stuff out back, or in their house. Much of the meat when frozen is hard to determine what it is, so don't be bashful—ask.

**Chicken:** Frozen chicken, mostly leg quarters, but sometimes even boneless skinless breasts—easy to find. Chicken pieces (chunks) and legs are usually in stock. They also sell large boxes with 15kilos of chicken legs for around 3000xpf (\$30) which can be shared with your friends or you can purchase a smaller box.

**Beef:** The beef we found was hard to identify and sometimes only suitable for stew meat. It is also often packaged in larger packages than a normal cruiser would want to deal with.

**Lamb:** We found nice lamb from NZ, but often the lamb is packaged as a large leg, costing around \$30 USD.

Again, the best time to shop is immediately after the supply boat comes in. Usually the stores will close for a few hours while they restock. As soon as they open, the good stuff is gone in a few hours.

Fruit like pamplemousse, lemons and limes, bananas, etc, are very scarce in the Tuamotus. Get all you can before you leave the Marquesas and/or Gambier.

In N. Fakarava and also in Apataki, some of the locals have gardens and they will sell to cruisers, but you need to ask around (see the Fakarava section for specifics on finding the gardens in Fakarava).

**June 2021:** Cautionary tale of ordering direct off the supply boat in the more remote Tuamotus (such as Toau). We and several other cruising boats spent a month in Amanu. This atoll is supplied by the Maris Stella. We used the phone number in the compendium to pre-order fruit and veggies. Our expectation was that these orders would be fulfilled and packages separately in Tahiti before arrival in Amanu. Our intention was to avoid depleting the islands supplies.

However, on arrival the ship set up the store as described in the compendium but fulfilled our orders from the stock they had brought for the island. It took a while for us to work out what was happening. It was very uncomfortable experience as the whole of the village was looking on.

Friends had the same thing happen in Raroia during lockdown although their experience was with a shop. Same story though. Ordering in advance meant they got what they wanted but it wasn't additional stock brought in. It did in fact leave less than the usual supplies for the locals.

Given the multiple options for online ordering (we used Sipac) I'd recommend cruisers do not make special arrangements in advance with supply boats on the remote atolls but rather place their own

orders online through personal shoppers, and just use the supply boats for delivery. Or just bring plenty of veggies in advance or buy local. – Grace of Longstone

### **1.7.11 Trading**

**Jan. 2020:** PLEASE think twice about trading booze and gun shells with the local population. Many people ask for alcohol in the islands but there is a VERY high rate of domestic abuse in all of French Polynesia. By trading or giving alcohol you could possibly be adding to the problem. In addition, the gendarmerie (cops) may not react well, either they want some too or they don't want you trading it into their village.

Good items to trade are fishing equipment, school supplies, snorkel gear, women's cosmetics, good quality backpacks, toys, hygiene items (shampoo, nail polish remover, toothpaste).

They aren't trying to steal from you, but they aren't going to give their stuff away either. We always give some little thing in exchange for fruit too. – Jacaranda

### **1.7.12 Translation Services**

Sabine Wissert translates French, English, and German. +689 87 32 55 47 and [sabinewissert@yahoo.fr](mailto:sabinewissert@yahoo.fr) or view her website [www.ca-papeete.justice.fr](http://www.ca-papeete.justice.fr) (page 33 and 35). She is a freelance translator and has been providing certified translations to French authorities and public administrations (legal documents, carte dejure, long-stay visas, residency permits, contracts, etc...). Contact her for a quote.

## **1.8 Communications**

See individual atoll section for specifics on communication options in those areas.

### **1.8.1 VHF Channels**

**General VHF Advice that applies to all areas:** Be aware that on high power, a good VHF will transmit 25 miles line of sight. So, if you are only doing within-anchorage communications, switch to low power. On the flip side, if you are trying to call across island, or to the next island, use high power, and turn your squelch down. Make sure you are aware which channels are automatic low power (ie 17, 67 on some radios), and stay away from the low-power channels for long distance conversations.

Though widely spaced in channel number, channels 16, 68, and 18 are very close to each other in frequency. Most VHF antennas are 'tuned' for channel 16, so long distance communications will work best on 16, 18 or 68. Conversely, in a crowded anchorage, transmission on high power on channel 18 or 68 may 'bleed' over to channel 16 (and almost any other channel, if you're close enough). You don't need high power to talk to the boat next to you, so turn your radio to Low Power!!

Also be aware that some channels that Americans use frequently are 'duplex' channels in International mode. So, for example, you may have trouble communicating with a European boat, or an American boat whose radio is in International mode, on Channel 18. (see any VHF guide for the full list of international and US channels and frequencies, but any US channel designated 'a', like 18a, 22a, etc will cause trouble with VHF's in international mode).

Make sure you ask in each port what the local channels are--both so you know how to reach someone ashore and so you know not to use those channels for your off-channel conversations.

**Jan. 2019 – VHF Channels. – Taitonga**

SAR: 06, 10, 11,

Port: 12

Ship-Ship: 08, 72, 77

### 1.8.2 SSB Nets

**Poly Mag Net:** Found at 8.173USB. There are two scheduled net times. The morning net is at 1800UTC and the evening net is 04:00UTC. For reference, 1800UTC is 08:00 Tahiti, 0830 Marquesas, 0800 Tuamotus, and 0900 Gambier. And 04:00UTC is 6:00pm Tahiti, 6:30pm Marquesas, 6:00pm Tuamotus, and 7:00pm Gambier.

They track vessels underway, monitor anchorage and weather conditions, and help cruisers stay connected. It is a great way to track your passage and have assistance when needed.

During off season (Nov-March), the morning net is only for emergency traffic and vessels underway. This is a great opportunity to provide your lat/long, sea and wind conditions, and other vital information during your passage. There may be times when the morning net may be suspended until season. However, the evening net occurs daily throughout the year and is open vessels underway and general check ins.

**Pacific Seafarer's Net:** You must have a HAM license to use this net on a regular basis, but they are always willing to help a vessel in distress (whether you have a license or not). This is also a good frequency to have saved in case of emergency—the Hams on the PacSea net will move heaven and earth to help any boat with a true emergency—ham operator or not. Even when there is no net going on this frequency, there are often hams monitoring the frequency for emergency traffic.

The Pacsea net operates on 14,300Khz USB at 0300 UTC. They start with a 'warmup session' at 0300, where you can call in and chat, and maybe hook up with someone who will make a phone call to the US for you. The "Roll Call" (boats who have checked in regularly and indicated they are underway) starts at 0310 UTC, and when they finish (30-60 minutes later), they call for boats getting ready to go on passage to get on the Roll Call list for tomorrow's net.

It's always a good idea to listen up on a structured net for a day or so to get the rhythm of the net, before calling in. You can call in for a radio check during the warmup period, or just after the formal net ends. There are usually people on the net who will do a "phone patch" for you—just ask.

**Pacific Maritime Radio (formerly Northland Radio)** offers a tracking check in service for vessels underway (fee required). Northland Radio is located in the Bay of Islands, New Zealand. Peter recently installed a new large antenna and has been able to work boats throughout most of the South and Central Pacific and as far as Alaska from New Zealand. Learn more and contact Peter Mott at <https://northlandmaritimeradio.nz/products/passage-tracking>. Contact [peter@northlandradio.nz](mailto:peter@northlandradio.nz).

### 1.8.3 Telephones and Cell Phones

See individual atolls for internet access. Most post offices will sell sim cards and most atolls have pay phone booths in the main villages.

The French Poly Country-Code is: +689

Vini - <http://www.vinispot.pf/index.php?lang=english>

Vini sim cards can be used for both internet and calling. However, data seems to burn through quickly with the bad connections and some data has "disappeared" off of cards. Vini sim cards and top up cards can be purchased at the post office (OPT).

**June 2021:** GoogleFi works in most places with Vini. It varied from 2G to 4G depending on what atoll you are visiting. – Sugar Shack

**Dec. 2020:** Tikehau, Rangiroa, Taou, and Fakarava North now have 4G speeds. Everywhere else will most likely be 2G. We found that GoogleFi will work in most places Vini works. Vini tended to work in most **major** atolls / anchorages. – Sugar Shack

**2019 verified (May 2017) - VINI Internet/data sim:** As reported They do sell out - so don't delay in sourcing one if you want one! - They sold out same day I picked up my card - I just made it!

You must take your id to the post office to purchase SIM cards. (they will ask for your Passport, but I forgot mine and was able to use driver's license). They will take a photo copy of your passport if you happen to carry it with you.

Top up cards may not be available in all denominations - so again buy when you see them!

If your device takes a smaller SIM than the one provided- ask at post office for them to cut it down to size (they have a special tool).

Default password for SIM is 0000 (does not seem to be in documentation - you will have 3 attempts to get this correct)

I inserted data SIM in my unlocked iPhone 4S and did not need to change any settings go get internet on my phone. Connection was often 'E' Edge - not even 2G - so be warned!

Personal Hotspot - Inserting SIM into my iPhone - 'personal hotspot' feature was initially disabled (removed from iPhone menu structure - presumably blocked by VINI but I really wanted it so I could get the internet from my laptop too... I managed to get it working on my iPhone - but not 100% sure what did it... but here is what I did:

- I went into settings -> cellular ->cellular data options -> cellular data network -> scroll down and in PERSONAL HOTSPOT section set APN to "internet" and no username or password - then restarted iPhone...(not sure if that was necessary!)
- From 'settings -> Cellular' menu - there should now be a 'Personal Hotspot' option - turn that on

Then the 'Personal Hotspot' option should be available in the main settings menu

Works best (most useful) when connected via USB to laptop (rather than wifi mode)

I also managed to get an old MIFI device (from the UK!) working - but only on 2G and painfully slow - such that most web pages simply would not load... so I gave up with that and stuck with the iPhone hotspot.

When first installed you need to recharge at least once in 30 days to keep the card active. After that the card can remain dormant for up to 3+ months before it gets deactivated.

Due to limited data on SIM (500Mb) and top-ups (100-400Mb), and low speed. I recommend keeping your device phone in airplane mode to be sure to only use data when really needed it (when you can simply turn off airplane mode).

With VINI SIM in - Text the message 'CONSO' to #7100 - and sometime later (maybe up to 20 minutes) you will get a reply text with your balance and end date. - Begonia

**2016 verified (2011):** You must have a cell phone that can operate on the European frequencies (or a tri or quad band phone). Can be purchased locally but pricey.

We use a cheap BLU all band cell phone we bought for \$17 on Amazon when we were in the US figuring if we had it stolen while traveling in South America it would be no big loss. Still working 4 years later. It has a dual sim card setup that makes it easy to switch between countries or charge our USB dongle SIM card.

We did not find a town that did not have telephone access. Even tiny towns had at least one phone booth at the Post Office/Mairie (Town Hall).

The cellular operator in French Polynesia is called 'Vini'. Voice & Data SIM cards are often available in the post offices in Tuamotus.

Prepaid cards start at 500F and up. We gave our family our FP cell phone number and they call us on our cell via Skype. Incoming calls are free in FP. – Soggy Paws updated by Jacaranda

#### 1.8.4 Wifi / Internet Access

See individual atoll section for specifics on internet options in those areas. See Telephones and Cell Phones for updated information on Vini and GoogleFi.

**Vini Wifi Network** - <http://www.vinispot.pf/index.php?lang=english>

**New 4G in Tuamotus:** The following atolls have 4G connection near the main villages:

Hao	Fakarava N	Fakarava S	Rangiroa	Tikehao	Toau
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**Reminder:** Internet access in French Polynesia is via satellite and is REALLY SLOW. Do your fellow cruisers a favor and turn off ALL automatic downloads (Windows Updates, podcast downloads, etc). Limit your Skype calls and turn off the video. Then we can all get our email, and be able to access important website information!!

You can purchase a Vini sim card and subsequent top up cards (500, 1000, or 2000xpf) which will give you the ability to make calls and text. These are good for 30-days once initiated.

There is a **new internet provider** available in Fakarava and Toau called Varua Hotspot. Services can be paid using PayPal and having an external antenna will greatly improve your connect.

**Varua Hotspot:** <https://hotspot.varua.net/en/internet-plan>

We could not find the coverage area for Fakarava, but the coverage area for Toau is listed below.

**Coverage for Varua Hotspot** in Fakarava and Toau. The French Poly Country-Code is: +689

- South of Otugi Pass -15.930778, -145.888796
- North of Otugi Pass -15.910546, -145.898656
- Maragai Old Village – 15.867805, - 145.931728
- Anse Amyot – Matariva -15.802479, -146.152291

**Plans for Varua Hotspot** in Fakarava and Toau

- Unlimited data up to 1MB download, up to 512Kb/s upload 8,40€
- Unlimited data up to 3Mb/s download, up to 512Kb/s upload 16,80€
- Unlimited data up to 5Mb/s download, up to 1Mb/s upload 25,20€

**Atolls with some internet access:**

Ahe	Apataki	Fakarava	Hao	Keuhe	Makatea	Makemo
Manihi	Raroia	Rangiroa	Takaroa	Tikehau	Toau	

#### Vini Wifi Network

Buy a Vini Wi-Fi prepaid card at any post office Vini store or many small magazines. Cost are not by the megabyte but by the hour and bandwidth can be very narrow. Cost are \$5 per hour for one hour and drop to around a dollar an hour for 100 hours.

Nearly everyone who has used the hourly Wi-Fi system have seen glitches where chunks of time vanish from their account. In fact, from about May 2016 to October 2016 a one-hour Vini WIFI card never expired (those were the days!). In Papeete there are easily accessible Vini shops with English speaking staff, here buying the 100-hour cards is a safer bet as they have been able to recredit users accounts.

## **VINI 3G Internet**

If you plan to be in FP for more than nine months then there are two options for 4G internet access either with your smart phone, 4G capable tablet or with a Vini 4G router. This is rather complicated to get as it requires letters from a marina to the Vini company to set up. Again, more information is available at the online Tahiti Cruiser's Guide.

**Dec. 2020:** We stayed in Marina Papeete for a few nights and asked Ken if he would write us a letter stating that we were staying in the marina. It was super easy; he already had a template and merely inserted our name and boat name. We then took that letter to Vini at Carrefour, paid for a Vini Box (\$80), signed up for the most data we could get per month 30Gig (at \$50/mo) and we were good to go for the year. We prepaid for the entire year as we did not want to have to worry about finding a Vini store in the Tuamotus (which don't exist) and we did not want to have to deal with monthly payments through a local bank account or OPT. They have several less expensive plans, but we wanted the most data. – Sugar Shack

**Nov. 2019:** Vini is able to run both data and voice. However, data is very expensive and slow in the Tuamotus. We found that where our Vini sim card worked so did our GoogleFi leading us to believe that GoogleFi was using Vini services. Both were 2G and very slow. – Sugar Shack

**Aug 2018:** Internet in French Poly is slow and limited. Particularly the cellular network is still 2g in most of the outer islands. Using our GoogleFi Phones, we can just barely send and receive e-mails, no surfing the web, etc. But change is coming! We are told that a new undersea cable is being run from Papeete, and will bring these islands up to a much higher standard. The cable has already made it as far as the Tuamotus. We also saw a poster up on a bulletin board here announcing this. It showed a diagrammatic chart, showing both undersea cables between bigger islands, and microwave links to smaller ones. We cruisers seem to like our wifi, and the locals will also get addicted quite quickly, I expect. Another one of those mixed blessings, I expect. – Kokopeli

**March 2017** - Vini Wifi Network (Replaced the old Manaspot)

Buy a Vini Wi-Fi prepaid card at any post office Vini store or many small magazines. Cost are not by the megabyte but by the hour and bandwidth can be very narrow. Cost are \$5 per hour for one hour and drop to around a dollar an hour for 100 hours.

Nearly everyone who has used the hourly Wi-Fi system have seen glitches where chunks of time vanish from their account. In fact, from about May 2016 to October 2016 a one-hour Vini WIFI card never expired (those were the days!). – Mary Ann II

**2016:** The internet in the Tuamotus is extremely slow (2G) and all handled via satellite. – Jacaranda

### **1.8.5 Starlink**

Starlink is highly recommended for travel in the more remote islands. There is often little cell service. We were able to stay in Raroia for three weeks in the far north east corner (with no cell coverage) and be able to stay connected, work, get weather updates, etc.

### **1.8.6 News**

After a lot of research on the internet before we left Central America, but I found that what worked best was to dial around on the 9Mhz band at the time of day I wanted to listen to news (morning and evening are the best times for propagation).

We found the BBC on 9695 am at 1600-1700 UTC (mornings) and 12095 usb at 0100UTC (afternoons).

## **Radio NZ**

9.580 AM FP time  
11.725 PM FP Time  
15.720 PM FP time

30-minute BBC broadcast at 16:00-16:30 Tahiti local time on Radio NZ

### **Radio Australia**

15.240 PM FP Time  
17.840 PM FP Time

Voice of America does claim to broadcast to French Polynesia, but all the broadcasts are in the middle of the night in French Poly. 1230-1300 UTC on 9600 and 1400-1430 UTC on 9830.

**Sept. 2018:** We have not found any BBC news via SSB or anything besides radio New Zealand (11.725) 18:00 local. Radio NZ gives very little or nothing of international news but does cover NZ. Frequencies we have listened to for radio NZ are 7.425, 11.725, 15.720 check around 1700Z-1900Z

We use an app called SWBC Sked that covers the whole world but appears that the freq list has not been updated since we downloaded it 3 years ago. Soggy Paws is right SW broadcasts are being phased out – Jacaranda

**2011:** As the internet proliferates, English-language voice broadcasts seem to be dwindling. Many of the broadcasts you can find these days by dialing around are either religious-oriented, or anti-American oriented (so listen carefully!). – Soggy Paws

### **1.8.7 News Via Email**

**2018:** We use the NPR (US National Public Radio) news feed when away from internet. It gives a headline with a short 2-3 line of data. <http://www.npr.org/sections/news/>. – Jacaranda

**2016:** Thanks to Naoma we use the following NPR summary. There is some text that you have to ignore but does give you a basic summary of US News. You can receive this via Saildocs--send an email to [query@saildocs.com](mailto:query@saildocs.com) with this in the body: send <http://www.npr.org/sections/news/>. – Jacaranda

**2011:** We had success, using Sailmail, in subscribing to a 'daily news email' from Reuters. We set it up so it went to a shore email address, and then we used Sailmail's Shadowmail feature to retrieve the daily emails when we needed news, and had good enough propagation, to retrieve the email, stripped of all the graphics and stuff.

The daily 'US News', coming in through Sailmail, was only 7Kb. It contains the 'top 10' headlines, with a one sentence summary of each. Check out Reuters <http://links.reuters.com>. – Soggy Paws

### **1.9 Getting Visitors In and Out**

All flights into French Polynesia go through Tahiti first, and then to airports in the major centers in the other archipelagos.

If you arrive with crew onboard your vessel, you MUST sign them off the crew list via Immigration before they leave the boat. Likewise, crew coming onboard via air and leaving via boat should be signed onto your crew list. Ask your agent or the Immigration office in your arrival port for current procedures.

### **1.10 Diving**

Diving in the Tuamotus is some of the most superb diving we have encountered. But if you really want to dive the best of the Tuamotus, you will need to have all your own equipment, spares, and a compressor aboard.



If you do NOT have a compressor aboard, have your dive tanks inspected and pressure tested before you leave for French Polynesia. Getting fills at any commercial dive operation can be difficult if your inspections are not in date. Just about any dive shop can do the annual visual inspection, but the every-5-year hydrostatic test takes special equipment. Even in the U.S. the dive shops usually send the tanks out for the hydro. It is likely that the only hydro testing you will find in French Poly will be in Tahiti.

There are two guides to diving in French Polynesia (see Printed Sources, below). However, coverage is limited to Rangiroa, Manihi, and Tikehau—where there are established dive operations.

Below is a summary of the diving we (Soggy Paws and Visions of Johanna) have done in 2010. We have not yet been to Rangiroa, Tikehau, and Manihi, all of which are supposed to have good diving, and some dive facilities.

Comments on specific dive spots can be found in each location’s section.

Atoll	Type of Diving	Dive Operations / Tank Refills
Hao	Pass Dives	Yes
Fakarava - North	Pass Dives (Sharks)	Yes - 3
Fakarava – South	Pass Dives (Sharks)	Yes – 2*
Makemo	Pass Dives	Yes
Rangiroa	Pass Dives	Yes
Tahanea	Pass Dives	No
Tikehau	Pass Dives	Yes
Toau / Anse Amyot	Pass Dives	No (Fakarava North **)
Toau / Otuigu	Pass Dives	No (Fakarava North **)

\* The Tetamanu dive operation at Fakarava South Pass does have a compressor, but they refused to fill our tanks due to ‘liability issues’. If you dove with them a couple of times before you asked for fills, you might have better luck.

\*\* All of the dive operators in and around the village at the north end of Fakarava also offer trips down to the South Pass, and across to Toau. But they are considerably more expensive than a local dive, and are only offered about once a week.

Basically, most of the diving in the Tuamotus are ‘pass dives’, where you are essentially doing drift dives in current. Diving inside the atoll is usually not as desirable, because the water inside the lagoon is not as clear as outside, and the coral not as spectacular.

**Diving the pass on your own:**

It’s not too difficult doing pass dives on your own, from your dinghy, in settled weather.

1. **Long Painter:** Depending on the pass and the conditions, you can either arrange a ‘surface support’—someone in a dinghy at the surface following your bubbles. Or tow your dinghy behind you. Towing is not too difficult in reasonable wind, but you will need a ‘tether’ on your dinghy about 75-100 feet long. This was definitely our preferred method of diving the passes.
2. **Best Time to Dive:** The best pass diving is to plan to go into the water about an hour after the incoming current has started. The incoming current brings the clear ocean water into the pass

before you start your dive, and also ensures that if you have a dinghy motor problem, you are inside the atoll and not drifting out to sea.

3. **Preparing to Pass Dive:** What we would do is get all of our gear ready in the dinghy before the dive, dinghy out to the approximate put-in location, and finish donning gear. Then when completely ready to jump in, reposition the dinghy one last time, and jump in and descend fairly quickly. It takes a little practice, but it's relatively simple.
4. **Do not anchor when doing a pass dive with any current!!** We made the mistake of dropping our tether over the side once, with the anchor attached, thinking we were in deep enough water so it would be suspended free of the bottom. But just as we got in the water and were ready to descend, the anchor hooked on the bottom, and the dinghy stopped dead in about 2-3 knots of current. Fortunately, both of us had a firm hold on the dinghy when it happened, but we struggled to hang on in the current, and could not do anything useful but hang on. We finally had to get back in the dinghy, start the engine, and motor forward against the current to get the anchor free. We now remove the anchor from our line when doing a pass dive.

**Safety:** It is always safest to dive the INCOMING current, so if you have a problem, the current is pushing you back into the lagoon. It is also safest to buddy dive with another dinghy, in case one has a problem. If no one else is going out with you, make sure another boat in the anchorage knows where you are going and how long you expect to be. Take a well-charged hand-held VHF, a hand-held GPS, and a waterproof flashlight. Tools for basic engine repair (starter cord, spark plugs, fuel issues), and an anchor on a long line should always be carried. It could be a long drift across the Pacific if you have engine problems while outside an atoll.

### ***1.11 Haul Out, Storage, Repair Facilities***

**Apataki Carenage Boat Yard** is the only facility in the Tuamotus for hauling, repairing, or storing a yacht. Reports from boats who have hauled there are good. The family who owns the Carenage is a very nice family with a nice facility and they are very careful when handling the boats. Their lift is capable of hauling fairly large sailboats and catamarans, and the price is reported to be 'very reasonable' (see more information in the Apataki section). They are supposedly getting a new lift in 2021.

Some cautions reported by other cruisers, however...

1. They cannot safely operate the lift in strong NE winds. So, if the wind is blowing strong from the NE, you will have to wait for the wind to switch back to SE or lighten up.
2. They have virtually no repair capability (no mechanics on the island capable of diesel engine repair, for example). This is truly a 'do it yourself' yard.
3. They only have one lift. If that lift breaks down, you may be stranded.

#### ***1.11.1 Liability Insurance for Haul out***

Most haul out facilities, marinas, yards will require liability insurance. If you need liability insurance to be hauled out, we heard that Poe-Ma Insurances is decent. +689 40 50 26 50, Fax: +689 40 45 00 97, [infor@poema.pf](mailto:infor@poema.pf), Located at Marina Fare Ute, B.P. 4 652 – 98713 Papeete, Tahiti. Boat insurance broker working with all marine insurance companies. Offices also in New Caledonia, France, and La Reunion.

**2020:** We approached Poe-Ma Insurance to obtain liability insurance for marina stays and they refused us as a U.S. vessel. We went to the main office in Papeete. – Jacanda

### **1.11.2 Surveyors**

See [Tahiti Cruisers Guide](#) for a list of available surveyors. They are all located in the Societies, but are willing to travel to the outer islands.

**Jan. 2021:** Patrice Beuscher has retired and is no longer offering survey services.

**Sept. 2020:** Christophe Citeau +689 87 79 63 81 [chrisciteau@mail.pf](mailto:chrisciteau@mail.pf) is a marine surveyor based out of Taha'a. He is not NAMs or SAMS certified. However, our insurance company approved his services after reviewing one of his surveys on a similar catamaran. We were scheduled for a haul out at Raiatea Carenage and Chris provided to be very responsive. He came out to the boat twice to do the out of water evaluation and the in-water evaluation.

The out of water evaluation took all of 6 minutes (if that). Now granted our boat is in good condition, but the timing was a little surprising. He looked at the hulls for structural damage, tapped around, evaluated our props, rudders, dagger boards, through hulls, and anchor.

The in-water survey took 3.5 hours. I had sent him a detailed list of all of our equipment on board (make, model, manufacturer, year, location) prior to his arrival which I am sure made his job a lot easier. We created this 2 years ago after our lightning strike. For our 2001 Catana 471 he charged us 73150xpf.

The report was fine, but I found him to be unyielding and unreasonable when it came to a few items. We disagreed with the value of our boat and he would not change his mind. Even after I showed him a few other similar boats and our last survey. Had he remained a little flexible I would highly recommend him, but he would not listen to reason or logic so I must say be careful. – Sugar Shack

**Nov. 2019:** Patrice Beuscher (+689 87 32 55 [cabinet.maritime.beuscher@gmail.com](mailto:cabinet.maritime.beuscher@gmail.com)). He lives in Papeete but will travel to other islands to survey boats. He is a Lloyd's agent, marine surveyor, Cook Island and Flag State Surveyor and has been assuming surveys in FP for 9 years working with insurers all over the world. IMIS approves him. He speaks English, but has had issues with "translation" with a few boats.

His recommendations for boat yards are listed in priority order: Technimarine Shipyard (Papeete, Tahiti), then Raiatea Carenage Shipyard (Uturoa, Raiatea, Society), third choice is Hiva Oa.

One boat reported that he is just an "ok" surveyor, report of "tick boxes" some contradicted other boxes. Did not complete or correct report. We reached out to him for a possible survey which we ended up not having to do. We found him "fairly" responsive and willing to provide information such as boat yards. – Sugar Shack

### **1.12 Pearls and Pearl Farms**

See individual atoll section for pearl farms and locations to purchase pearls in those areas.

If you are coming through French Polynesia via Gambier, that's the place to buy the famous black pearls. They are reputed to be better quality, more colorful, and less expensive than anywhere else in French Polynesia. We bought a good quality pearl necklace for about \$350—a similar necklace we priced later in the U.S. was selling in a reputable jewelry store for \$5,000+ USD.

The pearl farms do not seem to want to sell directly to the public. (And in fact, later we found it is illegal for pearl farmers to sell directly to the public—the pearl industry is highly regulated and taxed). If you are buying legitimately from a registered pearl dealer, you should expect to get a receipt, with taxes added.

In the Tuamotus, most people found either Fakarava or Apataki to be the best places for a casual pearl farm visit, and buying pearls. See those sections for suggestions on arranging a visit to a pearl farm.

**Avoiding Pearl Farm Entanglements:** There are lots and lots of pearl farms located throughout the lagoon. Most are marked with pearl floats. However, some of the pearl floats are just under water or are covered in muck that makes them hard to see. In addition, not all pearl farms are buoyed.

A pearl farm 'field' may be located a long way from any habitation, and typically in very deep water. If buoyed, the buoys are normally at opposite ends of a 'string' of buoys, so if you see 2 buoys, assume there is something suspended below the surface between them, and give them a wide berth.

**You should avoid going near and through the pearl farms.** It can be disastrous for you getting your prop or keel entangled in lines, nets, and floats. In addition, it can be catastrophic for the pearl farm owner having you destroy their lines, nets, and years' worth of pearl harvesting.

If you are approaching an area that is either marked as a pearl farm area on the chart, or where you see buoys, you must proceed slowly and keep a really good watch. It is also conceivable that the buoys are not visible on the surface, but are 5' below the surface, so keep an eye out for submerged buoys.

If you see a small boat/panga out in the area inside a lagoon, chances are they are tending pearl buoys. Again, proceed slowly, and keep an eye on the people in the boat—if they are agitated and waving at you, it is likely you are about to get entangled in their buoys.

### **1.13 Eating the Fish and Avoiding Ciguatera**

A comprehensive look at ciguatera can be downloaded from Jacaranda (Look for "You Gonna Eat That Fish?" Info about Ciguatera):

<https://www.jacarandajourney.com/ciguatera>

Learn about Fishing in French Polynesia: [Fishing in French Polynesia: \(jacarandajourney.com\)](https://www.jacarandajourney.com)

**Jan. 2019: Wikipedia:** Ciguatera fish poisoning, also known simply as ciguatera, is a foodborne illness caused by eating reef fish whose flesh is contaminated with certain toxins. Ciguatera Fish Poisoning commonly occurs in tropical and subtropical areas, particularly in the Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean, and the Caribbean Sea.

Symptoms may include diarrhea, vomiting, numbness, itchiness, sensitivity to hot and cold, dizziness, and weakness. The onset of symptoms varies with the amount of toxin eaten from half an hour to up to two days. The diarrhea may last for up to four days.

Some symptoms typically remain for a few weeks to months. Heart difficulties such as slow heart rate and low blood pressure may also occur.

The specific toxins involved are ciguatoxin and maitotoxin. They are originally made by a small marine organism, *Gambierdiscus toxicus*, that grows on and around coral reefs in tropical and subtropical waters. These are eaten by herbivorous fish which in turn are eaten by larger carnivorous fish. The toxins become more concentrated as they move up the food chain.

Any reef fish can cause ciguatera poisoning, but species such as barracuda, grouper, red snapper, moray eel, amberjack, parrotfish, hogfish, sturgeonfish, kingfish, coral trout, and sea bass are the most commonly affected. Ciguatoxins are concentrated in the fish liver, intestines, heads, and roe. The toxins do not affect the taste, texture, or odour of the fish and cannot be destroyed by cooking, smoking, freezing, salting or any other method of food preparation. Outbreaks can occur seasonally or sporadically, particularly after storms. Not all fish of a given species or from a given area will be toxic.

**Preventive efforts include not eating reef fish**, not eating high-risk fish such as barracuda, and not eating fish liver, roe, or fish heads. Ciguatoxin has no taste or smell, and cannot be destroyed by conventional cooking. There is no specific treatment for ciguatera fish poisoning once it occurs.

Mannitol may be considered, but the evidence supporting its use is not very strong. Gabapentin or amitriptyline may be used to treat some of the symptoms.

The US Centers for Disease Control estimates that around 50,000 cases occur a year. Other estimates vary up to 500,000 cases per year. It is the most frequent seafood poisoning. It occurs most commonly in the Pacific Ocean, Indian Ocean, and the Caribbean Sea between the latitudes of 35°N and 35°S. The risk of the condition appears to be increasing due to coral reef deterioration and increasing trade in seafood. The risk of death from poisoning is less than 1 in 1,000. Descriptions of the condition date back to at least 1511. The current name came into use in 1787.

**Ask the locals what fish is ok to eat!** Although sometimes the locals are able to eat some fish that tourists get sick from so just be careful.

**Symptoms:** Usually appear 3-24 hours after eating a reportedly good-tasting reef fish and largely resolve spontaneously within 1-4 days. Feelings of weakness generally last a few days to several weeks. In severe or chronic cases, recovery can take weeks or months with some symptoms continuing for years.

**Mild Symptoms:** nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle pain, numbness in the extremities, tingling (paresthesias), abdominal pain and cramps, dizziness, vertigo.

**Severe Symptoms:** Profound exhaustion, muscle and joint pain, feelings of loose or painful teeth, visual disturbances (blurred vision), slow reflexes, itching, shortness of breath, reversal of hot/cold sensations.

**Treatment:** Eliminate as much of the toxins as possible (vomiting, diarrhea, drinking lots of water. Keep rested and calm. NSAID's and acetaminophen (Tylenol) may reduce pain and headaches. Amitriptyline (Elavil, Endep) and gabapentin (Neurontin, Gralise, Horizant) may help with neural pain symptoms.

**Recovering – Things to Avoid:** All fish of any type, fish sauces, shellfish, alcoholic beverages, caffeine, nuts, nut oils for 3-6 months following illness because these foods may provoke recurrent symptoms. The liver is effected the most with ciguatera so you want to avoid anything that will do more damage.

**May 2021:** A Swedish boat in Gambier, with 7 souls on board, ate a large group for lunch and dinner (including using the bone marrow in a dish) and everyone suffered from ciguatera. Two had to be sent to the clinic for over 24 hours to receive fluids. All had diarrhea, vomiting, muscle pain, fatigue and numbness.

A young American couple in Rarioia got ciguatera from a small fish (caught by spearfishing). They had fatigue, nausea, exhaustion, and severe numbness in the fingers and feet. – Sugar Shack

## **1.14 Manta Ray Reporting**

Citizen science Manta Ray reporting will show you how to identify and photograph manta rays and then submit the information to French Polynesia Manta Research in Mo'orea. Visit:

<https://www.jacarandajourney.com/citizenscience>

## **1.15 Cruising Information Sources**

### **1.15.1 Tahiti Cruiser's Guide (online)**

[Tahiti Cruisers Guide Online](#). Cruising Guide for all of French Polynesia (not just Tahiti). Started by Chuck on Jacaranda and Julien Desmont, a local French sailor living in Papeete. Julien Desmont built the website and is hosting it as well. The collected information can be downloaded as a pdf, in case you need to try to arrange parts or repairs before you get there (without internet access). If you find a service/store that is not listed please send updates.

### **1.15.2 Facebook Groups**

The primary groups on Facebook for information on French Polynesia are these.

**French Poly Cruisers** <http://facebook.com/frenchpolynesiacruziers> 3200 members

A French Polynesia Cruiser Facebook group offers a great way to stay up to date on news and related information. Join the group for free, contribute updates, and stay in the loop. If the above link does not work, search for “French Polynesia Cruisers” in groups on Facebook.

**Puces Nautiques** is a buy, sell, trade Facebook Group in French Polynesia.

- Tahiti: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/583836411756984>
- Raiatea: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/304798790492913>

**Pacific Puddle Jump** <https://web.facebook.com/groups/1102530253191598/> 630 members

**Pacific Voyagers 2020** <https://web.facebook.com/groups/PPJ2020fleet/> 903 members

### **1.15.3 AVP (Sailing Association of French Polynesia)**

<https://www.helloasso.com/associations/association-des-voiliers-en-polynesie>

Facebook page too: <https://www.facebook.com/DesVoiliers/>

AVP is the Sailing Association of French Polynesia. This is a non-profit organization dedicated to assisting cruisers in French Polynesia. For a minimal fee (\$18/year) you can support them financially as they fight our cruising rights: anchorages, safer moorings, and a more positive cruising experience for you.

Membership also provides discounts in certain places in French Polynesia.

If you need translation, go to <http://voiliers.asso.pf>, click on tab “Devenir member” on top right, then click on “creer un compte” fill in your email, your identifier, password, name, boat name, and click “sourmettre”. To pay go to “Payer son adhesion” click adhesion 2020, (about \$18 USD) then “etape suivante.”

### **1.15.4 Pacific Puddle Jump on Groups.io**

<https://groups.io/g/PacificPuddleJump>

This group is where the people gathering in South and Central America meet to share information about crossing the big puddle. Fortunately, many previous years’ jumpers come back and share their information with the newbies. A good source of information, but not very organized, and it can be full of bloat from people who ask the same questions without doing any research of their own.

You must be a member to read or post anything on this site, but if you are getting ready for a Pacific crossing, it is well worth a few minutes to sign up for Groups IO and then sign up for this group. Be sure to explore the Files and Links pages, there is lots more information there.

### **1.15.5 Noonsite**

<http://www.noonsite.com>

Originally started by Jimmy Cornell, this site is a great repository of information for all those out-of-the-way places. Made possible by YOUR contributions.

### **1.15.6 Seven Seas Cruising Association**

<http://www.ssca.org>

The SSCA is a world-wide organization for cruisers whose primary function is to exchange information about cruising destinations. They have a monthly publication that is mostly letters from cruisers about the areas they are cruising. They also have a good website and a well-attended bulletin board. Membership is reasonable, and the monthly publication is available electronically every month. Indexed back issues are also available electronically.

### **1.15.7 Stopover Handbook / Yellow Flag Guide (PDF)**

**June 2020:** The old 40-page color brochure created by the French Polynesia Tourism Bureau and the Port de Papeete doesn't seem to still around. Instead, you can download the Stopover Handbook for French Polynesia from this site: <https://en.pf.yellowflagguides.com/>

Note: If you can't find it on this website, the latest version I have found will be posted here: <http://svsogypaws.com/files/#frpoly>

### **1.15.8 French Polynesia Birds**

[http://www.manu.pf/E\\_Oiseaux.html](http://www.manu.pf/E_Oiseaux.html)

**2009:** The above is an excellent website for identifying birds in French Polynesia and finding out their local names. – Nine of Cups

### **1.15.9 Sea Seek**

<http://sea-seek.com/index.php?geo=1480>

A French-maintained site that covers French Polynesia. They have assembled a pretty good harbor by harbor group of information (using Google Earth and Maxsea Chartlets). But it is mostly in French. It is possible to use Google or Babelfish Translate functions.

### **1.15.10 Cruising Reports**

We are indebted to the people and organizations who have documented their experiences and shared them with us. We can't do this alone and rely on cruisers sharing updated information. So, please be sure to document and email us your notes.

A few details about the boats are included, where we know them, so you can assess what 'a foot under the keel' means, for example.

Every section is a mix of several sources

**Jacaranda (2016-2021):** Jacaranda with Chuck and Linda aboard spent a year in the Marquesas before moving on to do the Tuamotus slowly in 2016. They have been sending us reports to add to the Compendia, and also posting more information and details on their website: <http://jacarandajourney.com>

**Sugar Shack (2018-2021):** Matt and Christine on Sugar Shack arrived in Gambier in early 2019 and have been sailing French Polynesia for a couple of years. Sugar Shack is a Catana 471 catamaran: 47' long, 26' wide, 1' draft. They've sailed from Turkey to the Caribbean, through the Panama Canal, to Costa Rica, Galapagos, Chile, Easter Island, and French Polynesia. Sugar Shack has passed through the Tuamotus three different times. <http://www.svsugarshack.com>

**Hoodoo (2020-2021):** Yanell Sandberg and Missy Magnusson have been sailing onboard Hoodoo a Lagoon 380 S2 for several years. After purchasing the boat in Florida, they came through the Panama Canal. They arrived in French Polynesia in April 2020 and have been cruising and enjoying the archipelagos for 2 seasons.

**Ari B (2019-2021):** Ari B is a Trintella 45. Length 45', draft 2.2m, width 4m. Alex (Austrian) and Carla (English) left the UK on Ari B in 2014, crossing the Atlantic via Cape Verde to the Caribbean where they sailed extensively from Tobago and Columbia in the south to Cuba in the North. Follow their adventures on [www.sy-arib.com](http://www.sy-arib.com). They arrived in the Marquesas in early 2019 and have spent the last two years cruising in French Polynesia (Marquesas, Tuamotus, Societies, and Gambier)

**Slingshot (2021):** Gavin and Jenn, Canadians, aboard their Sundeer60 with their two school aged kids navigated from Point Roberts, Washington in the Pacific Northwest in 2018, down the pacific coast of the USA and Mexico before embarking across the Pacific through French Polynesia, Suwarrow, Samoa, Tonga and to New Zealand in 2019 and then sailing back to French Polynesia in July 2020 where they are currently cruising.

**Eastern Stream (2021):** After exploring Patagonia & Chile for two years Jaap and Minke set sail to French Polynesia and arrived in Gambier in January 2020. Their steel ketch Eastern Stream has a length of 15 meter, a beam of 4 and a dept of two meters. They visited Gambier, Marquesas and part of the Tuamotus in the first one and a half year of their stay in French Polynesia, with the society islands still on their list.

**Grace of Longstone (2020):** Helen and Dave left the UK and have been successfully avoiding work since 2016. Grace is a Hans Christian 43. 15m long, 2m meter draft and 4m wide. They arrived in French Polynesia in July 2020 and have enjoyed exploring the different archipelagos for a year.

**Luci Para 2 (2020):** Floris and Ivar arrived in French Polynesia in April 2019 on their Buchanan 47. Length 14.20m, beam 3.60m, draft 2m. They visited Gambier, Tuamotus, and the Society Archipelagos.

**Pitufa (2013-2020):** Birgit and Christian on sailing yacht "Pitufa" (Spanish for [Smurfette](https://www.pitufa.at/gambier-islands/)) arrived in French Polynesia in spring of 2013, have explored all archipelagos and are still there as of 2020. They have spent all cyclone seasons (except 2015/2016) in Gambier and have written several articles and cruising guides. Visit their website for more information on cruising in French Polynesia and updates at <http://www.pitufa.at/gambier-islands/>

Check out their guides here: <https://www.pitufa.at/pitufas-cruising-guides/>

**Chaos (2018):** Chaos is a Lagoon 500 catamaran with approximate 5 ft draft.

**Dr. No (2018):** Dr. No is a Belgian-flagged monohull with a draft of over 2 meters.

**Nehenehe (2017-2019):** Farrier F-39 Trimaran, LOA 47', Beam 26', Draft 20" min Max 7'

**Moana (mid-2018):** Outremer 5X catamaran MOANA <http://www.rothacher.us>

**Moon Rebel (Late 2018):** British flagged, 35'/11m sloop with a 6'/1.80m draft

**Shindig (2017):** Shindig is an Oyster 465, home port San Francisco, with Rob and wife aboard.

**Spunky (2017):** Robert and Aneke arrived in March in the Marquesas with our sailing yacht Spunky, a 43-foot Morgan. They are taking a short sabbatical from working life, and plan to island-hop to Australia and sell the boat and go back to work in the Netherlands in late 2017.

**Duplicat (2017):** Rick on Duplicat arrived in Gambier and made his way through the Tuamotus, stopping at Amanu, Hao, and Fakarava. Duplicat is a Privilege 435 catamaran.

**Sea Dragon (2017):** Sea Dragon is a Celestial 48 from Lahaina, Maui with Kerstin & Brian aboard.

**Irene (2016-2017):** The operators of Apataki Carenage.

**Naoma (2016):** Naoma with Ryan & Nicole aboard crossed through the Tuamotus in 2016.



**Asolare (2016):** Asolare is a Amel 54 (16.4m) yacht with a displacement of 19 tons, Peter and Cheron aboard. They cruised through the northern Tuamotus in October 2016. And they left their Amel on a mooring in Fakarava for several months visit back to the UK.

**Hildegard Hansen (2016):** Information on Motutunga.

**Starry Horizons (2016):** Starry Horizons with Amy & David aboard is a 44 ft Helia catamaran. They “Puddle Jumped” in 2016. <http://outchasingstars.com>

**Slipaway (2011):** Jan and Rich on Slipaway spent the 2011 cruising season in the Tuamotus. Jan thoughtfully composed her inputs to me so they could be just ‘cut and paste’ into the Compendium. Thanks Jan!!

**YOLO (2011):** YOLO is a 42 foot PDQ catamaran and has a 4.5 draft. YOLO traveled to Tahanea, Fakarava, Kauehi, Toau, and Apataki in the Tuamotus in 2011. <http://yolotrautz.blogspot.com>

**Narama (2011):** "Narama" is 33ft sloop drawing 6.5 feet, with Stephen and Heidi aboard. <http://naramasvoyage.blogspot.com/>

**Irie (2013):** Mark and Liesbet, lived, worked and cruised on their 35’ catamaran Irie (draft 3.5 feet) for six years, before starting their Pacific crossing. They made their crossing from the Galapagos to Gambier in May, and were in Gambier for June and part of July, 2013. Irie is a Fontaine Pajot Tobago, a 35-foot catamaran with a beam of about 19 feet. Follow their adventures on [www.itsirie.com](http://www.itsirie.com)

**Soggy Paws (2010 - 2011)** - Soggy Paws was in Gambier for the month of April, 2010, and then sailed from there to Hao in early May. From there they went Tahanea – Fakarava S – Fakarava N – Toau – Fakarava N – Fakarava S – Tahanea – Makemo – Raroia, and thence to the Marquesas. In 2011, they came back to the Tuamotus from Hawaii, making landfall at Manihi, and stopping in Toau before moving on to the Societies. In 2010/2011, Soggy Paws was a CSY 44, a 44 foot monohull with a 5.5’ draft. Soggy Paws’ blog is here: <http://svsoggyaws.blogspot.com>

**Whoosh (2010)** - Whoosh only stopped at Kauehi and Toau in the Tuamotus.

You can find Whoosh’s log at: <http://www.svsarah.com/Whoosh/WhooshUpdateLog.html>

**Nakia (2010):** Nakia is a Hans Christain 33, drawing about 6 feet. In the Tuamotus, they visited Tahanea, Fakarava, Kauehi, Toau, and Apataki. Nakia’s blog is here: <http://svnakia.blogspot.com>

**White Princess (2010):** White Princess came from Tahiti in 2010 direct to Fakarava, and then wandered up north through some of the lesser known Tuamotus, including Raraka, Katieu, Aratika, Toau (main pass), and Tikehau. They have a steel boat with a 7’ draft.

**Visions of Johanna (2010)** - Bill of Visions of Johanna pulled together the first version of this ‘guide’ as they approached the Tuamotus in early 2010.

Visions’ blog is here: <http://vofj.blogspot.com> Their path through the Tuamotus was Gambier – Hao – Makemo – Katiu – Tahanea – Fakarava S – Fakarava N – Toau (Anse Amyot) – Tahiti. Visions is a 62’ custom racer/cruiser with a 8 knot average cruising speed and a 6’8” draft.

**Migration (2008-2009)** - Migration is a trimaran with a beam of 25’ and 4’9” draft. They entered French Polynesia from the southeast in 2008, and traveled NW toward Tahiti. They then went back to the northern Tuamotus enroute to the Marquesas from Papeete in 2009.

<http://brucebalan.com/migrations>

## 1.16 Printed Sources

We are consciously NOT duplicating any printed, copyrighted information here. It takes a lot of effort AND money to publish a cruising guide, and we firmly believe that if it is still in print, you should BUY it, not steal it (in electronic form).

We cross referenced which guide covers which island, since none of them cover all the islands.

Download some of the “out-of-print” cruising guides from Jacaranda.

<http://www.jacarandajourney.com/other-good-stuff>. He had the Guide to Navigation on his website, but removed it when he learned it was sold to another publisher.

### 1.16.1 French for Cruisers

[French for Cruisers](#), Kathy Parsons, 2004

This is a fantastic French phrasebook, created by a cruiser for cruisers. Don't leave the U.S. without it, as it is not available once you get to French Polynesia.

If you're going to a French-speaking area, French for Cruisers is invaluable. Slightly larger than a 'pocket guide', it is an invaluable reference for French terms for cruising things... like engine repair, dockage, etc.

### 1.16.2 Cruising Guides

1. [Tahiti Cruisers Guide Online](#). Cruising Guide for all of French Polynesia –Started by Chuck on Jacaranda and Julien Desmont a local French sailor living in Papeete. Can be downloaded as a pdf, in case you need to try to arrange parts or repairs before you get there (without internet access). If you find a service or store that is not listed please send in an update.
2. [Charlie's Charts of Polynesia](#): Charles and Margo Wood (with updates by Jo Russell and Holly Scott), 7th ed 2011. Holly Scott has taken over the helm at Charlie's Charts and has been updating these age-old cruising guides. There is now a 2015 edition on Amazon.com.
3. [South Pacific Anchorages](#), Warwick Clay, 2nd Edition, 2001, pages 22-33 Covers mostly the islands in the NW section, but does cover briefly a few of the atolls in the SE section (Fangataufa, Mururoa, Tatakoto, Amanu, Hao, Nengonengo)
4. [Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia](#), Patrick Bonnette & Emmanuel Deschamps, 2001 Provides the best coverage for some atolls, but is out of print and is becoming quite expensive to purchase if you can find it (in the \$200 range on Amazon). If you see it at a cruiser flea market, buy it.
5. [The Pacific Crossing Guide](#), published by the Royal Cruising Club Pilotage Foundation in association with the Ocean Cruising Club. Originally edited by Michael Pocock, and Revised by Ros Hogbin. We have the 2nd Edition published in 2003. Amazon has a version dated 2013. Note: There is nothing specific about the Tuamotus in this guide, but it is a good reference for the Pacific.
6. [Landfalls of Paradise](#), Earl Hinz, 5th Edition, 2006, University of Hawaii Press. Referring to the 1999 edition...Coverage of the Tuamotus is limited, see pgs 80-89. Only specifically covers Gambier and Rangiroa, but good coverage of background information about the Tuamotus.
7. [Pacific Crossing Notes](#), Nadine Slavinski, 2015, Rolling Hitch Press
8. [Yachtsmen's Guide to French Polynesia 2011](#) (PDF). This is a 40-page PDF file downloadable from the French Polynesia Tourism Bureau (French & English). (Note, it can be hard to find, and

may disappear off their website from time to time. Visit [Soggy Paws website](#) for the latest copy, so I have put the latest copy of the English version on my website at )

9. [Cruising Guide to the Leeward Islands of Tahiti](#) – The Moorings This book is the handbook that the charter company, The Moorings, provides to its charterers. We bought our copy from Bluewater Books in Ft. Lauderdale. Ours looks like it was done in about 2006. It is only 32 pages, but has probably everything you'd need to know about the easy anchorages and passes in the Leewards.
10. [Dream Yacht Charters Guide to the Leeward Islands](#). Downloaded from Dream Yacht Charters site.

### **1.16.3 Diving Guides**

1. [The French Polynesia Diving Guide](#), Kurt Amsler, Abbeville Press (undated). This is a pretty coffee-table type book. It only covers 3 of the Tuamotus (Rangiroa, Tikehau, and Manihi), but has some stunning pictures, and has a pretty good color section on 'The Fish of French Polynesia'. It also covers the Marquesas (Nuku Hiva) and The Society Islands. Available from Amazon.com.
2. The [Diving in Tahiti, A Diver's Guide to French Polynesia](#), Thierry Ziesman covers diving in Rangiroa and Manihi, plus other sites in the Societies, written in 1992. This is less of a coffee-table book, and a more practical guide to how to find dive sites on your own. We had an electronic copy from another cruiser, and I have never been able to find this in print or online. As it is out of print, I have posted an electronic copy at <http://svsoggypaws.com/files/#frpoly>

### **1.16.4 Books on Underwater Life**

1. [Reef Fish Identification](#) by Gerald Allen, Roger Steene, Paul Humann, Ned Deloach 2015. Or can purchase a download version from [New World Publications, Inc.](#) Jacksonville, Florida
2. [Simon & Schuster's Guide to Shells](#) by Bruno Sabelli. Published by Simon & Schuster. Very comprehensive guide to shells with more than 1230 illustrations

## **2 Passage Reports**

### **2.1 To/From the Marquesas**

#### **2.1.1 Makemo to Nuku Hiva**

**Nov. 2019.** Passage Details from Sugar Shack:

Passage from Makemo, Tuamotus to Nuka Hiva, Marquesas

Miles to destination (as the crow flies) 504 nm

Miles Traveled: 549nm (around atolls and a few tacks)

Max Speed: 12.2kt

Average Speed: 6.5kt

Travel Time: 84:57

Best laid plans change. Sugar Shack, along with our friends on Maple, had planned on leaving Makemo for the 4-day passage on 3 November. We checked several weather reports, routing apps, and the guestimator for the slack tide at Makemo. We were all set and excited to make our way to a new archipelago.

**Leaving the Makemo's East Pass:** Matt and Daryl (Maple) had been out to the pass several times this morning to check the pass. We were confident that a 10a departure out of the pass would give us an easy exit. \$hit happens and weather changes. A squall rolled in right at the time we needed to raise our anchor. Both boats decided to wait until the storm passed so as not to encounter strong winds and current out of the pass. At 11a we raised our anchor and motored to the pass. We did not actually get to the pass until 1145 and everything had changed. Now, we had wind pushing the boat out and sideways. Enormous waves were crushing over our bow causing the boat to hobby horse. It was extremely scary and nerve racking but we made it out safely.

**Passage Making:** After we got through the weather system, we found the wind at 20kts and were sailing along nicely with 8-9kts of boat speed. That's fast for us and we loved it. Unfortunately, we left Maple behind and lost sight of them within the first 3 hours.

Starting on a tack at 071 degrees, we had a choice to make. Go on the east or west side of Rarioia. We preferred to go on the east side as it is shorter, but might not give us the angle we want with the current wind direction. The weather models had 2 of them going east and 2 going west. The west models added 30nm to our destination. We decided to go east. We turned 20 degrees to a new heading of 50 degrees which allowed us to barely skirt the Taenga atoll and make our way around Rarioia. During the night, we tacked 3 times to avoid getting too close to shore and avoid the Takume atoll. Now we are close to the rhumb line and should be able to hold this direction for the rest of the 430 miles.

**Morning Day 2:** The forecast was way off the mark, but we are not surprised. We had 20kts of true wind and 2-meter seas that were steep, choppy buggers. We were making an amazing 8-9 boat speed toward our destination which made our VMG excellent. But it did make me feel horrible. As day turned into night our wind picked up and we were averaging 9-10's which is a bit too much for a beam reach. We depowered the boat by taking in another reef in the main and jib. Matt said it was "the worst sail trim he has ever seen and we are still doing 10kts."

**Morning Day 3:** Another choppy, bumpy, bashing day at sea. We continue to see high winds and big seas. I'm still feeling like crap, but carrying on. We are seeing a 2.8-3kt current pushing us sideways which is odd. We had an SOG 9.4. However, boat speed over water which takes into account the current at 8.1, True wind speed at 19.7 and our position. We had a choice of either changing course and heading to Ua Poa or continuing on to Nuka Hiva. Ua Poa 25 miles closer and we thought we could arrive at daylight. Whereas we'd have a night arrival in Nuka Hiva which is never good when you approach an anchorage for the first time. As we got closer, we decided to continue on to Nuka Hiva. The wind shifted and forced us to pinch so much that it slowed our boat speed down to a respectable 5-6kts. We'd arrive either anchorage at night and the Nuka Hiva anchorage is known to be a big wide-open bay.

**Arrival – Morning Day 4:** What a pleasant surprise arriving to a mountainous island, after spending months in the Tuamotus where the atolls are all flat. I am sure you can imagine my relief to set the hook! We found a 12-meter spot and dropped the hook onto the muddy bottom. After opening a few hatches, I set to bed while Matt enjoyed a nice frosty and well-deserved beer. – Sugar Shack

### **2.1.2 Marquesas to Kauehi**

**May 2016:** We left Taioha'e Bay, Nuku Hiva, on May 19th, headed for Kauehi. We started with a strong beam reach, while we had hoped to catch the afternoon slack tide on day 3, the wind died and we extended our passage to arrive on the 4th day in the late morning slack tide. – Starry Horizons

### **2.1.3 Fakarava to Fatu Hiva**

**June 2010:** We took the southern route into French Polynesia, arriving by way of the Gambier. So we chose to work our way east to the Marquesas before leaving for Hawaii in late September.

We left Fakarava ahead of a cold front, with light SE winds, and for the first 2 days, were able to sail a course between 030 and 060 magnetic, steadily making our way toward Fatu Hiva.

The cold front slowed down and a big high caught up behind it, and brought near gale conditions in the Fakarava area of the Tuamotus. But we managed to stay ahead of the front.

However, the last 2-3 days of the trip, the wind swung to the ENE, and strengthened to 20-25 knots. This was not originally forecast. We ended up bashing hard to weather in heavy wind and seas for days. We had hoped to make landfall at Fatu Hiva, but ended up in Nuku Hiva, further to the north and west of Fatu Hiva. – Infini

**August 2010:** It took us several weeks of waiting for weather windows to work our way from South Fakarava, east 50 miles to Tahanea, then ENE 60 miles to Makemo, and then ENE 75 miles to Rarioa. Though it would have been nice to sail these legs—the wind in late July and early August rarely goes very far south of east. And when it goes, it doesn't stay for long. After witnessing what happened to s/v Infini, we wanted to make our 'long jump' as short as possible.

After very mild conditions in June, the wind seemed to howl almost all the time in July (and into August). Big high-pressure areas kept coming from NZ and stalling well south of the Tuamotus, but they produce "reinforced trades" all over French Polynesia, even up to the Marquesas... winds blew 20-25 knots from the E-ENE for days. (This was at the end of a year of El Nino conditions, when conditions had changed to 'almost la Nina').

So, we opted to wait for the 36-48-hour calms between systems, and motorsail like hell eastward in hops. Besides, we did want to see Tahanea again, and visit Makemo before we left the Tuamotus. As long as we weren't in a hurry, we enjoyed this trip, and we pretty much on schedule until we got to Rarioa, and got pinned down by another set of reinforced trades for 10 days.

We left Rarioa with a GRIB forecast that had winds about 090 degrees at 10 knots, strengthening slowly over the next 3-4 days to 18-20 knots ESE on the final day.

The GRIB file ended up being uncannily accurate most of the time—except the switch to more SE-ly winds took about 8 hours longer than forecast. In the first day of light air, we motor sailed high of our straight-line course, trying to get some easting, and make miles while the conditions were light. As the wind strengthened to the 15-knot range, we turned off the motor and fell off to sail.

We ended up passing the twin islands of Tepoto and Napuka, which are directly on the route between Rarioa and Fatu Hiva, by sailing (on visual, during the daytime) close up to the SW corner of Tepoto, and sailing close around the western end. Interestingly, our Garmin Mapsource charts looked like they were more accurate (they had more detail) than the CMap/Maxsea charts, but they ended up being a little off in position. According to the Garmin charts, we sailed right across the middle of Tepoto! Though our CMap chart only showed a 1000-meter depth curve for Tepoto, it seemed positionally accurate.

The last day of our trip, the wind did strengthen up to 20-25 knots, with corresponding seas. Fortunately, the direction was about 120 degrees, so we could ease our sheets a little bit and still make Fatu Hiva. We sighted land about 35 miles from Fatu Hiva, but we didn't get much lee from the strong winds until we got to Omoa.

Once in the lee, we motored very close in along the shore, sightseeing. – Soggy Paws

## **2.2 To/From Tahiti & Mo'orea**

### **2.2.1 Tuamotus to Tahiti**

**July 2020:** Passage Details from Sugar Shack:

Passage from Tahanea, Tuamotus to Tahiti, Society Islands

Miles Traveled: 320NM

Max Speed: 12.5kt

Average Speed: 5.8kt

Travel Time: 51hours

We left Tahanea in mid-July with a perfect weather window. It took about 90 minutes to sail from the SE corner to the middle pass with just the jib at dawn. We went through the middle pass with 2kts of outgoing current, a little chop, but little problems despite being 90 minutes before slack tide. PredictWind estimated a 1.7-day trip, which would be "adventurous" for us.

The first day we were able to fly the parasail the entire day with 15-18kts of easterly winds. We opted to swap sails at night due to the stormy weather losing some speed. But were able to fly the parasail the next day which is always fun. The 1-1.5 meter following seas gave us a nice push along as we surfed down the waves. We lost the wind on the 2nd night and arrived safely at 1030am. Really nice sailing passage.

**July 2009:** Outside the passage we were met with a big swell and a stiff wind pushing waves in an opposing direction. We pitched and rolled while I set the sails but before long, they were up and finally we were pointed towards Tahiti. Sea was really rough after the bad weather over the past couple of days so we had a double reef in the main and same with the headsail. We had 275 miles to make Tahiti and wanted to keep things easy on ourselves and the boat.

Day one: So much for taking it slow. The wind has been between 20 and 28 knots. We are still double reefed and have covered 160 miles in our first 24 hours out.

Day two: We sighted Tahiti at 7:30 this morning. We were rolled around by big southeast trade wind swells mixed with local surface conditions that never dropped below 20 knots. It wasn't exactly a pleasure cruise and we certainly didn't have any chess board conditions but nothing broke and we covered the 275 miles in just over 40 hours. – Slapdash

### **2.2.2 Mo'orea to Tikehau**

**Nov. 2020:** Passage Details from Sugar Shack:

Passage from Mo'orea (Opunohu Bay) to Tikehau

Miles to destination (as the crow flies) 175 nm

Miles Traveled: 188nm

Max Speed: 11.1kt

Average Speed: 7.0kt

Travel Time: 27:46

With a full main and reefed jib, we had a beautiful sail toward Teti'aroa on a course of 030T. We had hoped to pass Teti'aroa on the east side, but we could not pinch into the wind high enough. So, we passed on the west side. Pinching a bit to get back on course, but a perfect sail throughout the day and evening maintaining a 7kt average. We encountered a few small squalls that pushed us off course a bit, but we were able to hold 035/040T for most of the passage.

We arrived at 0700am the following day. To calculate slack tide (for the pass) we used Rangiroa Avatoru pass (which would have been 0712). We heard that you subtract 1-1.5 hours from Rangiroa's slack tide to enter Tikehau (which would be 0530). Unfortunately, we arrived at 0700am. After a quick visual we headed in and encountered 2kts of ingoing current (guestimator predicted 2kts of outgoing –

interesting). From the center to the end there is a current that pulls you toward starboard, but otherwise it was an easy pass. – Sugar Shack

### **2.2.3 Tahiti to Marquesas via the Tuamotus**

**Feb/Mar 2009:** We left Tahiti in late February. It was still cyclone season so we carefully watched the weather for any signs of tropical storm formation to the west. It was good to be at sea again—the blue horizon in every direction. But the winds were contrary and we were making slow progress.

February is the transition time between summer and winter. That means unsettled weather. Rain showers and squalls rolled through daily. The showers are very confined—usually not more than a mile or so wide. The squalls can be much bigger. They pass quickly but dump an enormous amount of rain in a very short time. Sometimes they are accompanied by violent winds and thunder and lightning. One night we sailed through a terrific squall as we passed close between two atolls. Thunder and lightning were everywhere and, at times, the driving rain brought visibility to almost zero. We were grateful for GPS and radar.

We headed for Anse Amyot on Toau; home of our friends Gaston & Valentine, whom we met last year. Since the Marquesas were both north and east of our position, going either direction would help us when we again tried to sail there. Makemo is due east of Katiu and, having one of the larger villages in the Tuamotus and good provisioning, made a logical next stop. At Makemo, we'd been watching the weather carefully and the forecast called for a week of light winds. The Marquesas would still be upwind, but we like sailing to weather in light air.

It was a quiet and calm six-day sail. Occasionally frustrating as the wind often blew directly from the direction we wanted to go, or it didn't blow at all. – Migration

## **2.3 To/From Hawaii**

### **2.3.1 French Poly to Hawaii**

In 2010/2011 several boats made their way up to Hawaii for the winter for boat work and re-provisioning (and to get out of to French Poly for the requisite 6 months).

Going up, a couple of boats worked their way from the Tuamotus to the Marquesas where it was an easy reach to Hilo, Hawaii. (See Soggy Paws' blog <http://svsoggypaws.blogspot.com> for September 2010 for trip details).

A couple of other boats left from the Societies for Hawaii—they were a bit harder on the wind, but all made it to Honolulu OK. It was a fairly fast 15-day trip from the Marquesas. A slightly longer slower trip from the Societies. (see Nakia's blog <http://svnakia.blogspot.com> for Oct 2010 for the details of that trip).

### **2.3.2 Hawaii to French Poly**

Late April 2011: 4 boats made their way back south from Hawaii to Manihi in the Tuamotus. One boat left from Hilo and tacked east for a day before heading south. One boat left from Maui, and 2 from Honolulu. The first week was a wet slog, hard on the wind on port tack. After that it got easier. The ITCZ was not a big deal at that time of the year, in fact it was in transit from its winter location of just south of the Equator to its summer location just north of the equator. The worst squall encountered by all 4 boats was one 50 knot squall with a little bit of lightning. Most squalls were only up to 25 knots, a bit of rain, and no lightning.

The boat that left from Hilo and tacked east for a day, made it as far east as 141-20W, before easing the sheets and heading south. This boat could have easily continued close-hauled and made the Marquesas (but they didn't have time to visit there).

Soggy Paws left from Honolulu, motor-sailed in very light wind conditions, east to about 40 miles south of South Point on the Big Island, and then sailed the rest of the way. Soggy Paws' waypoint at the equator was more westerly than anyone else's, at 147°00W, and were still were able to make Manihi in the Tuamotus without too much trouble and without tacking.

The trip length from Honolulu to Manihi for all 4 boats was between 20 and 22 days.

For Soggy Paws' notes on Hawaii, look for the Hawaii Compendium at <http://svsoggypaws.com/files/>

## **2.4 To/From Gambier**

**May 2021.** Passage Details from Sugar Shack

Passage from Gambier to Hao / Amanu

Miles Traveled: 515nm

Max Speed: 15.1 (thru the pass)    Average Speed: 5.8kts    Travel Time: 3 days 18 hours

Sugar Shack along with 4 other boats left Mangareva for the short passage to Hao. We all chatted about the "good" weather window which predicted N-NE winds at 15-18kts with moderate 1.5-2-meter seas from the same direction. However, within 1 mile of the red marker we all saw different conditions. Instead the wind fell NW, right on our nose. Looks like there will be some tacking in our future. One of boats decided to head back and wait for a better weather window.

Five hours later one of our three fishing lines goes flying off the reel. Matt spends 4 hours reeling in a 60-kilo yellow fin tuna and another 3 hours cleaning it.

Day 2 and Day 3 were perfect sailing conditions with 12-15kts, 1.5 meters seas, and sunny skies. Unfortunately, it was not sailing in the right direction. Tacking, tacking, tacking. With a few periods of motor sailing as the wind died to less than 5kts a few times. We eventually made it on this piss poor weather prediction. Not an "ideal" passage, but not horrible either. – Sugar Shack

**Dec. 2020.** Passage Details from Sugar Shack:

Passage from Amanu (Tuamotus) to Mangareva (Gambier)

Miles Traveled: 481nm

Max Speed: 10.6kt    Average Speed: 6.6kt    Travel Time: 73

We left Amanu at 0930 with the hope of arriving the Gambier in 3 days. We had a nice window which offered North of East winds, little to no rain, and almost a straight shot down the rhumb line. The only downside to this passage were the waves which were 2-3 meters on the forward quarter panel/nose. The routes had us turning left out of the Amanu pass and going between Amanu and Hao. What a mistake! We should have taken the longer route and gone around the NE side of Amanu (8nm longer, but we would have had a better wind angle and we would have avoided the mess between the two atolls). When we hit the area between the two atolls, we found ourselves in the middle of wave chaos. The 3-meter waves were coming from multiple directions and tossing us around. It was awful and it lasted the entire length of Hao (33+nm). It was a poor start to our passage.

However, once we cleared the Hao, the waves settled to one direction (N of E). For the most part, we saw winds coming from North of East at around 070-080T. Waves stayed at 3 meters for the first 2 days



and died down to 1 meter on the last day. We did dodge a few squalls, but for the most part had a dry sail the entire way down. We only used the engines to charge the batteries and to assist us with 2 squalls. We were pinching pretty hard to 45 apparent and often trimmed the sails to avoid flogging.

We held a course of 140-150T for the first couple of days and then were able to turn more east when the winds shifted, to a course of 116T.

**Nov. 2020.** Passage Details from Sugar Shack:

Passage from Tikehau to Gambier forced to stop in Amanu

Miles Traveled: 336nm

Max Speed: 11.0kt

Average Speed: 5.7kt

Travel Time: 58

It is always fun trying to find a 6+ day weather window to get you from the Tuamotus to Gambier. Especially when the prevailing winds are from the east and you need to go east. However, we found a window that we “thought we get us from Tikehau to Gambier, about 800nm in 6/7 days. The goal was to make as much easting as possible before the wind shifted. We left Toau at 1430 in the afternoon with light winds, calm seas, and blue skies. With the bright, full moon we easily spotted Kauehi and Raraka at night and altered course (passing them on the east side).

The following day we passed Katiu, Makemo, and Tauere on the east side as well. As we were approaching Hao and Amanu we had a choice to make. Our weather predictions were showing two options. We could motor east of Amanu, sail for another 1-2 days, then motor the last 24-36 hours to Gambier (wind shifts and dies). The other option is to slow the boat down and go to Amanu to wait for another weather window. We took option B, slowed the boat down, and enjoyed 10-beautiful days in Amanu.

**May 2020:** Route: Gambier - Hao

We left Taravai village on 29 May (just after quarantine was lifted and a weather window opened up). It was a short window in between a few maramus, but a good window none the less. Most of the sail would be a downwind run with moderate winds and 2-3-meter seas. We flew several different head sails based on the wind. A large asymmetrical, a small spinnaker, and a parasail. We had 12-15kts of SE wind and 3-meter seas with long intervals for the first 2.5 days. On day 3 we lost the wind and the seas came down to 1.5-2 meters from the East. We left with two other boats: a 38' Leopard and a 50' St. Francis. The other two boats stayed on the rhumb line and we veered to the east following Predict Wind recommendations. As it turned it either way would have been fine as we saw similar weather conditions throughout our journey. – Sugar Shack

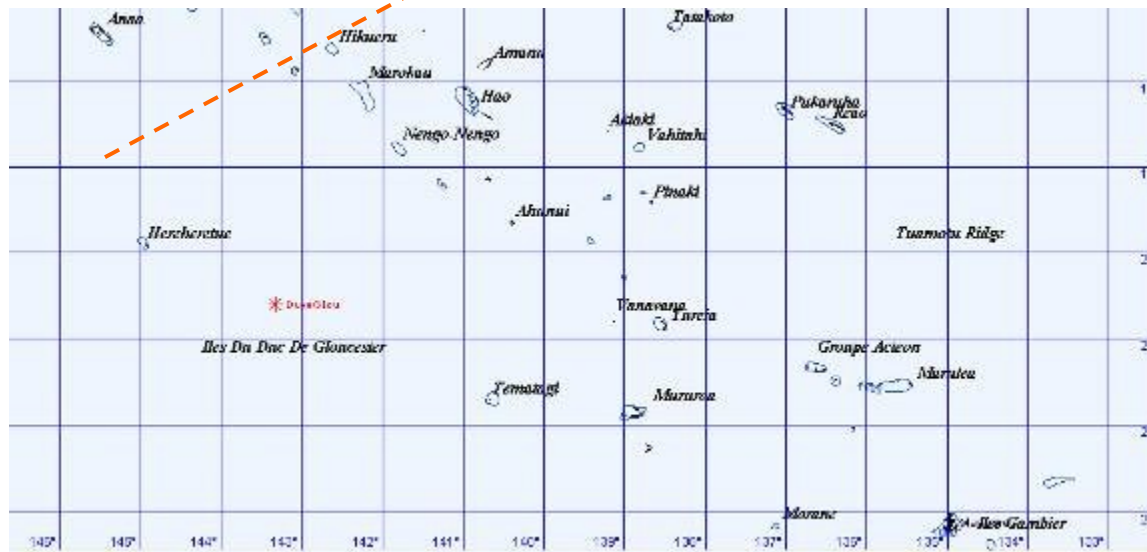
**May 2019:** Route was Gambier - Hao -Tahiti

We could not wait for a good weather window as we had a flight to catch in Tahiti. We left the Gambier with light winds at 7-8 kts and had full sails up for the first 24 hours. The next day we lost the wind completely and had to motor. On the third day we got a little more wind and motor sailed. We arrived to the Hao pass at 0530 and waited for slack tide to enter the pass. Total of 460nm with a max speed of 8.7kt and an average speed of 5.0kt. After spending a few days in Hao. The first two days we had very little wind and motor sailed (mostly motor). The next two days we had a nice downward sail using our spinnaker. All in all, it was an uneventful passage. Sure, we could have used a lot more wind, but we made it safely. Several other boats got stuck in Gambiers for another 7 weeks waiting for a weather window. – Sugar Shack

### 3 SE Tuamotus from South to North

The order the atolls are presented in this section is in the order you would normally encounter them coming up from Gambier. Though some guidebooks include Gambier group as part of the Tuamotus, Gambier is covered in Gambier and Australs Compendium.

SE Tuamotus



#### 3.1 Fangataufa (Closed)

Guidebooks:

South Pacific Anchorages, 2nd Ed, 2001, pg 22

#### 3.2 Mururoa (Closed)

Guidebooks:

South Pacific Anchorages, 2nd Ed, 2001, pg 23

#### 3.3 Nengonengo (Shallow Pass, Private Atoll)

Guidebooks:

South Pacific Anchorages, 2nd Ed, 2001, pg 23

**June 2020:** Nengonengo is owned by the Robert Wann family. The Wann's are THE major pearl industry in FP. Robert is called the Emperor of pearls and is the guy who started the pearl industry in FP. The pearl farm has been shut down but there is a caretaker on the atoll.

**It is forbidden to be in the lagoon as it is a private atoll. A caretaker will come and tell you to leave.**

Looking at satellite pictures, there appears to be a pass that may be navigable for a shallower draft boat. There is an airstrip and a beach visible on the southeast island, plus some houses and structures. The approximate location of the entrance to the pass is 18-42.4 S / 141°49.9 W

"This atoll is almost bare apart from an islet at the eastern end with tall coconut palms. The pass is 4nm WNW of the east end, with a least depth at the entrance of 2m. The range of the tide is normally 1-2m, but is greatly affected by local winds. There is a 1m coral shoal in the pass, dividing it into 2 navigable

channels. There is a very strong flow of water in the pass. Slack water is reported to occur about 2 hours before high water.

Anchorage is reported to be possible west of the pass, .1 mile offshore in 30m. There is reported to be good anchorage in the lagoon, north and south of the pass.”

**2019:** Googling on the internet, it appears that it is a private atoll and is currently (late 2019) [for sale for around \\$55 Million USD](#). There is an airstrip on the island and a supply ship stops in occasionally.



### ***Village, Wifi, Flights to Tahiti***

## ***3.4 Hao (Pass, Fuel, Supplies,***

Hao was previously the site of a large French Navy base which supported the nuclear testing activities in the southern atolls. In 2002/2003, the base was shut down, but the Navy still maintains a small presence on Hao.

### **Guidebooks:**

- South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 23
- No coverage in Charlies Charts or Guide to Navigation and Tourism
- Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia (Bonnette)

### ***3.4.1 Ciguatera Warning***

**Jan. 2019:** Ciguatera is reported in the lagoon. According to a report in Tahiti Info (Local Tahitian newspaper) there were 11 cases of ciguatera reported by the clinic in 2017. Ciguatera is one of the most under reported illnesses in French Polynesia. Proceed at your own risk. – Jacaranda

### ***3.4.2 Pass***

**Hao has one pass called Passe Kaki and is known to be particularly “tricky and challenging.”**

**18°03'90S / 141°0 0'31W**, pass coordinates.

**May 2021:** The Guestimator and Navionics put “slack tide” at 5:15am. Sunrise was 5:26am but lucky for us the sky brightens up before the sun actually rises. We had an Amel 46’ wanting to follow us in the pass which we had used 6x over the past 2 years. What we encountered was like nothing we have ever seen. We drove by the pass twice and decided against entering as the standing waves were present. At

6:10am we were able to maneuver our boat around the west side of the pass. We got about 1/4 of the way into the pass with our two Volvo 50hp engines at 2000rpm.

The breaking waves tossed us around a bit as they gained strength with the sudden 30kts of wind. We pushed the engines to full throttle at 2400rpm and could not move forward. The current was rolling at 7-8kts outgoing and we were not moving forward. We unrolled the jib for more horse power and still no forward motion. We tried for an hour and literally just hovered behind the red buoy. The Amel who followed us had it worse as they could not get passed the waves and were tossed around like a tooth pick in the washer machine.

We finally decided to abort. Lucky for us the pass is wide and we were able to roll the jib, turn to starboard and avoid the Amel, the reef, and the majority of the breaking waves. Clearly wrong time. We were both lucky, but be warned, the guestimator is just that a guess and we used 3 hours before/after high/low tide to confirm. Both wrong. We headed for Amanu. – Sugar Shack

**June 2020:** We arrived at Passe Kaki at 2200, unfortunately. During the last 18 hours of our passage we slowed the boat down considerably after we realized we would miss slack tide. As it turns out we still had to drift all night until the next daylight slack time. We entered at 0900 with 3kts of outgoing current and a slight incoming swell. This was “slack tide” according to the Guestimator. Which is why they call it a “guestimator.” We hugged the right marker and made the pass with no issues. – Sugar Shack

**Jan 2019:** We came thru the pass at full flood and stayed slightly to the western part keeping out of the turbulence on the inside. No problems coming in on a full flood. The pass is wide and there are range markers.

If you want to enquire about the tides before leaving, there is a Municipal Policeman named Stellio who is based in the Mairie's office. He is a fisherman and very plugged into tides and slack water. He speaks English and is helpful in determining slack water when we departed since nothing, we had agreed with each other.

Passage from the pass to/from the village is relatively clear of bommies. There are a few large ones that are marked and a couple smaller unmarked ones. – Jacaranda

**April 2010:** For a reason that I still don't fully understand, we transited our first ever Tuamotu pass into Hao with a very strong ebbing current and significant standing waves at the exit of the pass. Our instrumentation, (after the fact) showed that we had an average current of 7.4 knots against for almost 10 minutes. At that point it was hard to make much headway and we actually backing into two standing waves, flooding the cockpit and sending some water down the companionway as we hadn't thought to put the dropboard in place. Luckily, we have a big boat with a very powerful motor.

The water in the lagoon was quite high because of the 3 days of 15-20 knot easterlies which are creating waves big enough to crash over the reef, filling up the lagoon. We still don't know when low tide was, but are pretty sure that if we had waited a few hours it would have been a much more reasonable time to go through the pass. A boat entering the lagoon a day later reported a reasonable current on entry at the right time). – Visions of Johanna

### **3.4.3 Anchorages and Moorings**

**Please float your chain!** Protect the coral and prevent future damage to marine life!

And save yourself the hassle of having to unwrap your chain. Simply use fenders or old pearl farm floats (see “Anchoring Around Coral”).

### 3.4.3.1 Town of Otepa Anchorage

To go to Otepa, follow markers and sketches in cruising guides, with good light it is very easy, you could even sail, as isolated reefs are easily seen and far apart.

This image shows the old military basin (“U” shape) and the main village about ¼ mile below it.



**June 2020: 18°06.380S / 140°54.560W** dropped in 10 meters of sand around a lot of bommies. We put out 7 floats to avoid getting tangled. Close to town and easy access to quay, but can be loud on weekends and you often get locals wanting a tour or visit. – Sugar Shack

**April 2019:** In front of the village: be very careful as there are several metal traps, lines, and dead floats that get tangled on your ground tackle. It happened to us and 2 other boats. We anchored to the left of the main village and got tangled up pretty bad in 3-meter x 4-meter metal trap and lines which took us awhile to disengage.

The anchorage has plenty of room. It was beautiful the entire time we were anchored in 12 meters of water. We did have a day with no wind, and we turned around, but for the most part it was no big deal as we were the only boat in the anchorage.

You can also anchor in the old basin which is really protected. There were three boats tied to the concrete wall. A 4th boat came in afterwards and tied across the way to the other concrete wall. If concrete sounds horrid, try anchoring in the middle which we heard is about 5 meters. When Sailmore arrived, there were 9 boats in the old marina, and she said it was "comfortable." – Sugar Shack

**Feb 2019:** At the Town Anchorage, I had to dive down to at least 15' below the water (18' above the anchor) to see the anchor in just 38 feet of water. Some days are better but 35-foot visibility was the best we ever saw on just one day out of 23. – Nehenehe

**Jan 2019: 18°06.381S / 140°54.581W.** Anchoring off the village does take some patience to find a spot that your hook lands in sand. But after driving around for a bit we did manage to find a spot, in 40' very close to the entrance to the town basin.

**18°06.503S / 140°54.514W.** There are a couple of sandy spots just off the main wharf where friends on a 46' cat anchored a number of different times. Be aware that kids may swim out to your vessel from the main wharf. – Jacaranda

**June 2017: 18°06.151S / 140°54.656W.** This is a decent anchorage where there is more sand though still some coral to watch out for. The wharf is available to use without charge. Its better on the west side than the east, but the east is still usable. There is a liveaboard catamaran there, so behind them is a good place. Some boats used the main wharf by the village - I believe this is by arrangement and possible if a ship isn't due. – Duplicat

### **3.4.3.2 Old Military Basin**

**18°05.929S / 140°54.855W** - Entrance to the old military basin.

**June 2020:** This old basin is in a “U” shape but the walls are at unusual angles. You can fit 2-3 boats along the west wall (closest to the lagoon). You can fit another 2-3 boats along the inner wall (closest to shore). You can also Med moor several boats, anchor and use one of the two moorings. The moorings need to be checked as they are not maintained and should only be used by small boats. There is no cost to tie up inside the basin. However, it is about a ¾ mile walk to the village. This is a very protected space.

We tied up to the eastern wall (closest to shore) to hide from a maramu (storm). We were in here with 2 boats on our side and two boats on the western wall. We had (4) A4 fenders, (4)F4 fenders, (2) bow lines, (2) spring lines (2) stern lines. Our fenders were touching the water when we went to bed. The maramu was so strong that it brought 42+kts of wind, pounding rain, thunder, lightning, 1-meter swell and it flooded the basin raising the water level by 1-1.5 meters. We woke up to our catamaran banging against the concrete dock as the fenders were no longer effective because they would pop up with the incoming swell. It was a long, scary night. At a small break in weather (0330), we put out an anchor and tied it to midship and tied another line to the mooring and our stern. Just be careful during weather as this maramu surprised us all. – Sugar Shack

### **3.4.3.3 Airport Anchorage**

**Jan. 2019: 18°03.889S / 140°58.242W.** We moved up from the village to anchor near the airport to gain shelter from a NW breeze of 25-35kts. The location was very sheltered since we anchored very close to shore. The 3 issues were the depth (60'), the number of bommies, and not being able to see the bottom. We somehow (luck) managed to drop our anchor in a sandy spot between two bommies and put 4 floats on the chain. Gusts to 40 and anchor held fine. We did get some SW wind as the squalls swept by to the west of us and it was lumpy for an hour. But during the strong part of the storm we were very sheltered. – Jacaranda

### **3.4.3.4 Kawau Anchorage**

**Jan. 2019: 18°11.105 / 140°50.583W.** A “kawau” is a finger of reef that runs from the land side of the atoll into the lagoon. This offers fair protection from the wind waves depending on the wind direction as the reef at low tide is about .2 meter below the surface and some parts of the reef are exposed.

There are a few kawau's that extend into the lagoon of Hao. In E - ESE breeze of 12 kts we anchored on the west side at app in about 30' water. There are a number of bommies here but with luck and good light you should be able to drop your anchor in sand. When the wind went to the SE at 18kts we bounced and would have been better off at the pearl farm (earlier reported) 2.5 miles further up the lagoon. – Jacaranda

#### **3.4.3.5 *Nake***

**June 2020: 18°24.9057S / 140°40.6987W** dropped in 5 meters of mud with floats. We had been told that Nake was a paradise and the gem of Hao. However, we did not find it to be so when we visited. The water was very cloudy with extremely poor visibility. The holding was in mud and didn't stick too well for us or 2 other boats. When you pull your anchor up the seabed or mud had a horrible, vile smell which could also be found along the shore of the beach. However, the few locals we encountered were lovely and very friendly as they farmed their copra.

**18°24.9919S / 140°40.748W** is another anchor spot in 6.5 meters of mud. It took us a couple of tries to hook the anchor while trying to avoid the bommies. The southerly route down to Nake is full of reefs and bommies that are not all on the charts. Have a look out on the bow, especially once you make the turn. – Sugar Shack

#### **3.4.3.6 *Near the Pass***

**Near Pass: June 2020: 18°04.72S / 141°01.111W.** Dropped in 15 meters of water. We anchored here during a NW wind and found it breezy and protected. The anchor came up covered in sand, just the way we like her.

We did take the big boat to a few other places to see if they were suitable for anchoring and found that they were not. The first spot we looked at was at 18°04.597S/141°00.188W and was surrounded by bommies. We could not find a sandy spot anywhere within reasonable distance to the bommies (even with floats). The second spot, 18°04.585S/141°00.771W was in a little area surrounded by reef. We found a small gap to squeeze the boat through, but once inside it was 6-7 meters deep. With proper scope out we would be too close to the reefs so we exited gracefully. – Sugar Shack

**Near Pass: 18°04'31S / 140°59'75W.** There is a protected anchorage just inside the lagoon E of the pass. Here you can wait for better light before proceeding inside the lagoon, or wait for the right time to go out of the pass. It's good sand with isolated coral heads and there is a very shallow dinghy landing pier to go ashore and visit the point and old shooting range. There is also an anchorage on the W side of the pass.

#### **3.4.3.7 *Other Anchorages***

**Orare: June 2020: 18°18.2286S / 140°49.4734W.** We dropped in 5 meters of sand surrounded by bommies. We floated the 35 meters of chain with 4 floats. This spot is just south of the "finger" and is a pretty little spot known for its manta rays. I'd recommend anchoring further out as there are fewer bommies to contend with. Our friends dropped at **18°18.2184S / 140°49.5721W** in 6.5 meters of water. – Sugar Shack.

**June 2017: 18 13.196S / 140 49.274W.** There's a lovely anchorage by an old pearl farm - we spent several blissful few days there. The owner of the farm invited us to join them for freshly caught and BBQed fish - we had a wonderful afternoon. – Duplicat

**Tony's Farm: 18°15'58S / 140°50'07W.** It is very easy; further on you have to really pay attention for isolated coral patches and just submerged reefs and mostly underwater lines holding the pearl shells (sometimes marked by buoys, sometimes not!). If you are set up for scuba, you may help with some pearl farm jobs in exchange for some black pearls! -- Jacaranda

#### **3.4.4 *Formalities***

Check In - even for boats already checked into FP. The Gendarmerie expects all boats to clear in with them immediately upon arrival. Hours: Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri: 0700-1000. Wed: 1400-1700. Sat: 0800-1200

**Phone:** Hao Gendarmerie phone # +689 87 79 62 03

**Location:** Their office is located 3 blocks to the left from the quay on the main road and then turn right you will see the sign - Maybe a 10-minute walk.

**June 2020:** We were the 3<sup>rd</sup> boat to arrive this season and we decided to join the other two boats in the old military basin. After docking, all crew went to the Gendarmerie who kindly asked us to return at 1500 with all of our paperwork. We arrived with passports, boat registration, and FP entry form (green). We had been here the year before so they had most of our information on file. They asked our friends for their call sign and MMSI number. The entire process took about 10 minutes and they were super friendly. – Sugar Shack

**Feb. 2019:** They request passports, carte de sejour if applicable, ships documentation, FP entrance paperwork. In addition, they want to know ships call sign, MMSI number, type of HF radio (VHF & SSB). Very friendly and took all of about 10 minutes. – Nehene

### **3.4.5 Yachtsmen Services**

#### **3.4.5.1 Cooking Gas (Propane / Butane)**

**Feb 2019:** Magasin Jojo, Magasin Vahine, & Magasin Otepa have cooking gas available but no one will fill cooking gas bottles. You may purchase new bottles at a cost is 2900xpf for the gas and the normal 3000xpf deposit that is returned when you bring the empty tank back (save your receipt). We transferred gas ourselves in the inner harbor dock under a small thatched roof hut. Using the beam of the hut to hoist the tank. A very pleasant spot in the shade to enjoy the scenery while waiting for our bottles to fill. - Jacaranda

#### **3.4.5.2 Fuel (Diesel / Gasoline)**

**Fuel:** There is no fuel station. The locals buy direct from the supply ship or buy it at a premium from the magasins. You can also buy direct from the boat using a valid duty-free certificate.

- **Fuel by Cecile.** +689 87 74 20 84. Cecile is a lovely lady that we met on her motor bike. She is a fuel agent and we gave her our diesel jug that she filled and brought to the dock. She speaks some English and is very helpful. She will pick up and drop off at the dock. Her delivery fee is 1000f + cost of fuel. She does not take CC. You can pay for the fuel at Magasin JoJo's or Magasin Otepa and have Cecile deliver to the dock.
- **Magasin Jojo** diesel & gasoline was 175xpf per liter. (2019). Drop off your jugs and pick up later in the day or next morning or have Cecile delivery them to the dock. You can load to your dink behind their store. No CC for fuel (but ask). We bought 8 liters of gas and thought they did not charge a delivery fee but nope there was a 1000f fee and it turned out to be the most expensive gas (\$12 gal) we bought anywhere in the world! I should have combined it with others needing fuel.
- **Magasin Otepa** is able to refill fuel jugs. We left 2 small gasoline jugs, paid for them by CC 175xpf per liter. You can pay for fuel by CC. Leave the jugs, pay and pick up next day.
- **Magasin Amelie** will also fill jerry cans.
- **Supply Ship:** You can purchase 200L drums direct from the ship.

#### **3.4.5.3 Trash and Recycling**

Receptables are available near each magasin. There is a trash receptable near the old military basin for the houses. Be courteous and ask the family if you can leave your trash before dumping. We did not find any recycle bins unfortunately.



### **3.4.6 General Services**

#### **3.4.6.1 Air Tahiti Office**

**Feb 2019:** Located above Magasin Jojo open only a couple of days a week for a few hours. Jordan's wife from Magasin Jojo runs the Air Tahiti Office. From quay, go to main road, turn right, on right hand side, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

#### **3.4.6.2 Bank / ATM**

There are no banks or ATMs. The Post Office (OPT) will accept USD to purchase stamps, but they will not change out money. Jordan at Magasin Amilie has changed money for some cruisers at 100xpf to \$1.00.

#### **3.4.6.3 Fiberglass Repair**

**June 2020:** +689 87 33 88 73 (WhatsApp) Olivier teaches fiberglass work at the local college. He and his wife, Aro, live south near the cemetery (past Magasin Otepa). The house is on the left side looking towards the cemetery with a garden out front. They both speak French and very little English. There was a severe maramu that came through while we were docked at the old military basin (near the houses). The basin was flooded, raised the water 1.5 meters and had 1-meter swell. Despite having (4) A4 and (4) F4 fenders we banged against the concrete wall. The hull sustained a ¼" dent and many scratches. A friend told us about Olivier and his wife Aro. The weather was such that we could not do fiberglass work, but they were lovely. – Sugar Shack

#### **3.4.6.4 Gendarmerie**

**Phone:** Hao Gendarmerie phone # +689 87 79 62 03

**Location:** Their office is located 3 blocks to the left from the quay on the main road and then turn right you will see the sign - Maybe a 10-minute walk. Hours: Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri: 0700-1000. Wed: 1400-1700. Sat: 0800-1200. Location from the main quay: Turn left onto the main road (past the church). Take the 3<sup>rd</sup> right and they will be on the right. They are close to the dispensaire (hospital). We stopped by after hours and they told us to come back in the afternoon. They are very accommodating. They want all vessels to check in with boat paperwork, entry paperwork and passports. It is free and only takes 10 minutes. – Sugar Shack

#### **3.4.6.5 Laundry**

**May 2019:** In the old military basin, on the right-hand side (north side of lagoon) is a house with a boat ramp (usually has a boat). They are willing to do laundry for 1000xpf. Washed, line dried, folded. – Sugar Shack

#### **3.4.6.6 Le Mairie**

Hours: Mon-Thurs: 0700-1200 & 1300-1600. Fri: 0700-1400. Location: The La Mairie office faces the main quay and is located next to the post office. They are very friendly and offer free wifi connection from 1600-2100. – Sugar Shack

#### **3.4.6.7 Medical Center – Katagiteoe**

**May 2019:** Location: From the main dock, turn left. Follow the road until it almost dead ends, it will veer right. Turn here. Follow this road until it dead ends and turn right. A school will be on your left and the hospital is on the right (lots of solar panels on roof). Take stairs to 2nd floor. Be sure to sign in.

I had a severe bite on my ankle that quickly turned into a staph infection while we were underway from Gambier to Hao. We had 6 visits, procedure to heal a staph infection, and received medication for a total of \$28 USD. We received unbelievable care from kind, compassionate, well trained staff. – Sugar Shack

#### **3.4.6.8 Post Office**

Hours: Mon-Fri: 0730-1200 and 1300-1500. Location: Across from the dingy dock near le Mairie. You can buy SIM cards, recharge SIM cards, pay your prepaid and postpaid Vini contracts and exchange money.

#### **3.4.6.9 Wifi**

**June 2020:** We found three places that offer wifi. Hao now has 4G internet access. GoogleFi works too.

**Le Mairie** (by dock) offers free internet during 1600-2100 at no charge. You cannot access the portal until 1600. You can probably get this at the boat. Wide open. Must go web page to agree to terms. – Sugar Shack

**Pension Chez Parua** (next to Vahine Magasin) still offers the best internet on the island. They do not “ask” for money. However, it is recommended to pay them 1000xpf for use of their internet if you are not staying there. We paid 1000xpf for 4 days’ worth of access and they were accommodating. They will still host a dinner for you with 24-hour notice and they will rent bikes for 800xpf/day. We were told 4G could be accessed here but we did not see it. Pension Chez Parua has much faster internet than Gambier, but not at 4G.

**Snack Tia:** Located across from Church near quay. We did manage to have lunch there as we stopped by and spoke with the owner who speaks good English. They have offer wifi to customers. – Sugar Shack

**Feb. 2019:** The internet here is the slowest we may have ever encountered, 45 minutes (on a good day) to send 280KB’s worth of emails using Outlook.... don’t even try to use it when the kids are out of school! The mayor’s office still has the free internet access after 4PM until they open the next morning around 8am? The post office and some of the stores/pensions have internet access too. – Nehene

**Jan. 2019:** First the locals have told us that the fiber optic cable is here on the atoll but none of the infrastructure has been established. Well don't expect getting even slow internet and you may be pleased with the results - maybe not! We were able to connect our Vini Router here and thru put was 0.02mps download speed. We also connected to Vini Hotspot using our ships wifi antenna and again it was enough to get mail. Thru put speed was 0.02-0.03 download upload was 0.01mps. Shocking eh? Mairie de Hao has wifi available from 16:00 - 21:00 no charge. Equally slow results but we could connect from the boat. – Jacaranda

**June 2017:** The mayor shared the wifi password with us which was usable on the boat in the anchorage and at the wharf, albeit slow (especially when windy as the satellite dish moves, reducing throughput!). Some boats used the main wharf by the village - I believe this is by arrangement and possible if a ship isn’t due. – Duplicat

#### **3.4.7 Provisions**

**June 2020:** There are 3 stores to the right of the quay on the main road. All 3 stores are well stocked. The plane brings in fresh vegetables from Tahiti on Sundays and sometime on Thursdays. Vegetables are very expensive as they are flown in. We saw a box of strawberries for 3500xpf!

- **Magasin Jojo:** +689 40 970 270 email jojohao@mail.pf. Hours: Mon-Sat: 0530-1200 & 1600-1900. Sunday’s only open when supply ship arrives from 0600-1000. Location: Turn right from

dinghy dock, on right side, about 100m along on the lagoon side. Jordan is the owner. Fresh baguettes available from 0530-0630. Credit cards accepted no minimum. This magasin was formerly Magasin Amilie. Fresh veggies available by 8:30 - 8:45 Mondays <<< Best choices>>>

- **Magasin Vahine:** +689 40 970 577. Hours: Mon-Sat: 0800-1200 & 1530-1830. Location: Up the road from Magasin Jojo, 50m on your right. A smaller but very well stocked store. Look for the sign on the main road. Credit Cards accepted, no minimum. Fresh veggies available by 08:00 Mondays.
- **Magasin Otepa:** Hours: Mon-Sat: 0530-1200 & 1600-1900. Sunday: 0600-1000. Location: Past Magasin JoJo, about 300 meters from wharf on the ocean side. Otepa is a good size with decent provisioning. There is beach access directly across the street from the store 1 lot towards town. Fresh croissants and danishes available before 0900. Easy for loading large grocery loads or obtaining propane. Ask one of the clerks in the store to show you where to land the dink. Credit cards accepted with a 5000xpf minimum. Fresh veggies available by 07:00 Mondays
- **Bakery:** There is fresh bread available at Magasin Jojo between 5:30 - 07:00 daily (not on Sunday). But getting there earlier than later will ensure bread is available. There were out at 07:15 this am
- **Supply Ship:** The supply ship comes every 3 weeks. There are two ships that provide supplies, but their schedule fluctuates.

### **3.4.8 Restaurants**

- **Snack Tia:** Good food. Open for breakfast & dinner. Located across from Church near quay. We did manage to have lunch there and spoke with the owner who speaks good English. They have wifi
- **Snack Maria:** Located on the street across from the church, walk towards the ocean reef.
- **Snack Bogosse:** Located beyond Magasin Otepa. Unsure of exact location or hours. Heard they're open for lunch.
- **Snack Kurariki:** +689 87 74 0852 and +689 40 97 0233 Hours: Mon-Sat: 1700, dinner only.
- **Pension Chez Parua** +689 87 70 28 89. Prepares dinner with 24 hours advance reservation.
- **Ronald's House: Feb. 2019:** Ronald at the somewhat hard to recognize but centrally located Snack Shop (blue home kitty corner to the Mayor's office) speaks very good English and has treated us so very kindly. I highly recommend his Pizza at \$1 a slice and the best priced meals we have seen. He opens for lunch and dinner; we really like him. – Nehene

### **3.4.9 Activities**

#### **3.4.9.1 Diving**

**June 2017:** The pass is a good dive. I went with some locals - they have a pearl-farm buoy installed outside of the pass, a little to the west. You'll see two buoys there, we picked up the western-most one. The dive is fantastic - absolutely loads of fish, often manta rays, but we only saw Eagle rays. – Duplicat  
A new scuba center is being set up by Laurent, Padi and Cmas instructor, with great dives offered in the pass. You can anchor conveniently in front of it, as it is located just at the North edge of the village. – Duplicat

### **3.4.10 Cruiser Reports**

**June 2020:** We had been told that Nake was a paradise and the gem of Hao. However, we did not find it to be so when we visited. The water was very cloudy with extremely poor visibility. The holding was in mud and didn't stick too well for us or 2 other boats. When you pull your anchor up the seabed or mud had a horrible, vile smell which could also be found along the shore of the beach. However, the few locals we encountered were lovely and very friendly as they farmed their copra. – Sugar Shack

**Jan. 2019: School Donations:** The college (High school) in Hao brings students from 11 surrounding atolls and they board in Hao, going home only for vacations. Many of these students come from very poor families that do not have the money to supply them with many of the basics (clothes, shampoo, toothpaste, soap, etc). The headmaster often dips into his salary to buy these items for the students. If you have any clothes that you don't use, but are still in good shape, or extra soap, shampoo, toothpaste, flip flops etc., please contact the headmaster or any of the teachers at the school. I am sure it would be much appreciated. – Jacaranda

**Feb 2019:** Hao (in general) has the most coral head filled shores of any of the atolls that we have visited. It also seems to have what is attempting to almost become an interior fringing reef. All the shallow water anchoring techniques we are used to employing were useless here because of the coral shoals and heads that are prevalent in the depths that we have anchored in so far (17' to 8' depths). It seems that we had to anchor in over 35' of water and the bottom is usually not visible here at over 35 feet. It's hard to pick a sandy spot. Two other boats here spent hours trying to untangle from coral around the anchorage near the pass.

Hao has really friendly folks and they said that they had never seen three cruising boats at the town anchorage this time of year (Jacaranda, Coastal Drifter, and us). Not long ago there were also an additional two catamarans. This generates a bit more interest from all the kids in town. – Nehenehe

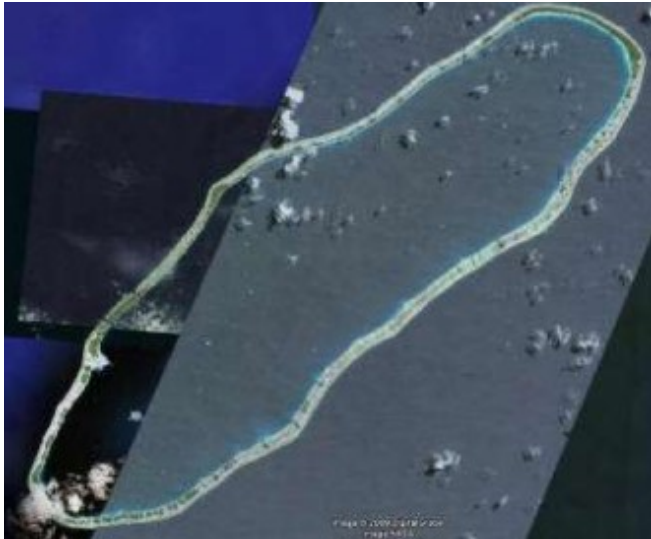
**Feb. 2019: Theft!** We were anchored about 350 feet off the main central Quay in about the only large sandy spot we could readily see. Apparently, some teenagers swam out to our boat while we were in town (One of the other boats saw them swimming around our boat, we think we may know which ones). They reached thru our Portlight and stole items from the boat. Outside of Papeete, this is the only boat theft we have even heard of during the year that we have been here. It has left me feeling really poorly about Hao in general, I'll probably feel different in a couple weeks (it occurred just yesterday). It changes things when your home has been treated this way.

The school here has over 200 students and is also a boarding school for many off atoll children, some very poor. They don't have money to buy personal hygiene stuff and that's a lot of what was taken from our boat. This is also the only spot in the Tuamotus where we were offered to buy pot on the street. I think the boarding school changes the cultural dynamics in the village at Hao. I reported the theft to the Gendarme and he was very concerned. When told I was leaving tomorrow, he said that he would try to find the perpetrators and make them apologize by this evening. As always... the gendarmes were happy, kind, and concerned. I always feel better after speaking with them.

**Weather:** A low is approaching from Tahiti, with forecast high winds (30-40kn) for three+ days starting Saturday (it's Thursday today). Hao is a big atoll with poor anchorages due to coral and not a good place to weather this out. The winds are forecast NW and the little marina is open to the west with a 5-mile fetch. It will become a washing machine with abrasive concrete walls. Winds have been veering 180 degrees in a somewhat short time span during the last 30kn blow we experienced here. So, we left. – Nehene

### **3.5 Amanu (Pass, Limited Supplies)**

Pronounced Ahm-a-nu, with emphasis on the first syllable.



#### Guidebooks:

- South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 23
- No coverage in Charlies Charts or Guide to Navigation and Tourism

**Warning: January 2019:** According to a report in Tahiti-Info (Local Tahitian newspaper reporting from FP government Health Dept statistics) there were 3 cases of ciguatera reported by the clinic in 2017. Ciguatera is one of the most under-reported illnesses in French Polynesia. One of these cruisers got a severe case of ciguatera after asking a local copra cutter which fish are safe to eat inside the lagoon. – Jacaranda

#### 3.5.1 Passes

There are several passes into the Amanu lagoon, but only one is truly navigable. The Navionics charts for the Fafameru pass is NOT accurate. It is imperative that you eyeball it instead of relying on the charts.

Call Etienne on VHF 16 and he'll give you advice on the pass (in French). The pass is not too hard but the current really moves through it and it is narrow.

1. **Passé Fafameru – Navigable pass (17°50.535S / 140.51W)**
2. Passé Teikariri – depths as low as 1.5, used by local fishing boats.
3. Passé horokumu – too narrow, not used at all.
4. Passé Manauateik Ariki – too narrow for cruising boats
5. Passé Nord – no information on this pass

**May 2021:** After our disastrous attempt to enter the Hao pass, we motored 3 hours to the Amanu pass. We waited for slack tide and entered with about 5kts of incoming current. Six days later we exited with about 5kts of outgoing current, but both experiences were manageable. – Sugar Shack

**Feb. 2021:** Slack water in the pass is 2 to 3 hours after LW/HW, similar to Hao. – Arib B

**Jan. 2021:** Currents run very fast especially on the ebb. But it's evident from the turbulent water outside the pass when this is the case. We waited until the approach looked calm and carried 3kts of current going in. It was smooth and trouble free. – Grace of Longstone

**Dec. 2020:** We arrived at Passe Fafameru at midnight (from Toau) and circled outside until dawn. After watching the pass, we decided to wait until slack tide. According to the guestimator that would be 0824. However, at that time it was ripping and roaring so we decided to continue our circling. About an hour later, the pass finally calmed down. We encountered 2kts of outgoing current. The dog leg (on port that is to be avoided) was clear in the bright sun (thank goodness) as was the reef next to the concrete wall (starboard). Be careful not to cut the corner too soon as the reef (by concrete wall corner) sticks out pretty far.

Exiting the Pass: Coming from a SE anchorage, we zipped nicely across the lagoon. Arriving at the pass around 10:00am which had a 2kt outgoing current. The dog leg was clearly visible and the pass was nice and smooth. 1kt of outgoing current as we entered and it slowly increased to 2kts outgoing. Very easy.  
– Sugar Shack

**June 2020:** We entered the pass at dawn. The sun (which would have been shining right towards us) was not up yet, but there was plenty of light. There were 3 knots of current against us, but the sea state was calm and we managed to keep the boat under control in the middle of the pass. As we proceeded slowly, we could easily identify the reef at the end of the pass. The Navionics tidal info (for neighboring Hao) was useless and did not correspond to the Guestimator info. The latter was more accurate for HW and LW, but those don't correspond with slack times, which we found to be about 2 hours before HW. – Luci Para 2

**Jan. 2019:** 17°51.385S / 140 50.978W. Depth 12m. – Coastal Drifter

**May 2010:** The pass pretty easy to run, although it is quite narrow. The dog leg right at the end of it is extremely easy to see and navigate. I entered with about 2kts outgoing current and had no problem going in.

I exited at approximately the maximum outward flow at the time, around 5 knots. I debated about attempting it or waiting several hours for slack, but saw a local runabout come in, then soon after go back out the pass, and figured if they could handle it, my sea-going boat should be up to the task. I did cruise above the entrance of it to look down and saw no big waves or anything scary.

The reef at the entrance was not visible as a reef; it was a waterfall as the water rushed over it and down into the pass. Other current came sliding in from the SE to merge with this one.

I hit the pass at near full-speed ahead as I wanted to be going faster than the current to maintain steerage. If you enter the current going too slowly, there is a risk that, as the current grabs you, at some point your boat speed and the current are the same and your boat will not answer to the helm. I worried about problems where the two currents met, and tried to avoid being right on that line, but it wasn't a problem.

Once out the pass I aimed to exit the current before the worst of the turbulence, exiting at a 45° angle. If you exit too directly, there is a risk of being spun as your bow bites into the eddy while your stern and rudder are still being pushed by the current. Anticipate this effect (called an "eddy-turn" in whitewater canoeing) and be ready with strong corrective rudder as you cross the eddy-line. These techniques should work in any pass with strong current with you so long as there are not overly large standing waves or extreme boils and overfalls at the end. Wait for slack, if you cannot see the full length of the pass. – Fellow Traveler

### **3.5.2 Anchorages and Moorings**

**Please float your chain!** Protect the coral and prevent future damage to marine life!

And save yourself the hassle of having to unwrap your chain. Simply use fenders or old pearl farm floats (See "Anchoring Around Coral" for details).

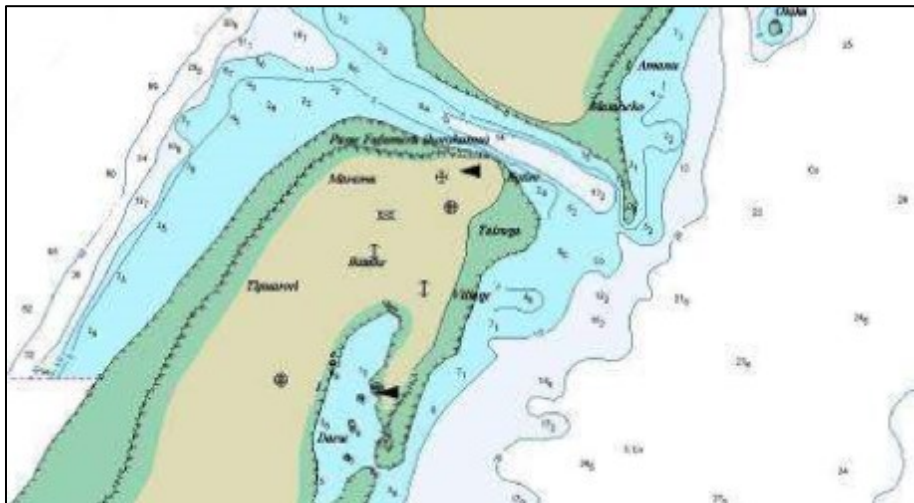
### 3.5.2.1 Town Basin (near Passe Fafameru)

**Nov 2023:** You can anchor in the little harbor (darse); however, you should ask Francois, the mayor, for permission beforehand. With the tide down .3 meters, we didn't see less than 2 meters depth in the short channel. Bow and stern anchor in the S part of the harbor. Not recommended if it is blowing hard from south of east. - Migration

**Nov. 2020:** There is a basin near the town that small boats have been known to anchor inside. It is a very narrow pass to get inside the basin (about 7.5 meters wide) and the depth is about 2 meters. Once inside you should be protected from strong trade winds.

**Dinghy Dock:** You can leave your dinghy inside the town basin. It is about 1.5nm from the Point Koutu Korigo anchorage (around the reef). Not terribly far, but when the wind blows it makes it an uncomfortable and wet ride. However, you can walk to the village across the motus & water (see post under activities). – Sugar Shack

**June 2017:** The small harbour at the village has its entrance marked with a pair of stakes, and with strongish winds it can be “interesting” entering but we took our 7m wide catamaran in with 20knots on the beam - tight, but doable. We anchored in there for our last night so we could say our goodbyes to all our friends ashore without having to endure the long dinghy ride around from the anchorage in those winds - it would have been very wet. – Duplicat



**May 2010:** There is a 30-foot-deep bank just inside the pass right off the village, but this is not a good place to anchor. I tried it as the light was not good for exploring the lagoon, but after only a couple of hours my chain seriously wrapped around the coral. Tama, a friendly local, came out and snorkeled it, telling me which way to steer to get it free, and diving down to unwrap it and still it was not easy.

The recommended anchorage further south is a ship anchorage: 60 feet deep or more, and still a risk for wrapping coral. I was told that boats with a maximum depth of 1.5 meters could enter the small boat harbor in the village. – Fellow Traveler

### 3.5.2.2 Point Koutu Korigo (south of village)

**Jan. 2021:** Point Koutu Korigo (south of village) **17°51.37S / 140°50.92W**. Also known as “Horseshoe Reef” can be a tricky anchorage due to the tower like bommies. Tuck in behind the reef and float your chain in 8-17m. There are patches of sand and we found good holding but did have to get help to de-snag our anchor when raising it. We helped two other boats with similar problems. Trip lines are useful

here. Upside of this anchorage is that it's a dinghy (sometimes wet) ride to the village. Or take your dinghy carefully across the reef to the southern end of the village motu (a large pile of sand), walk 10 minutes. – Grace of Longstone

**Nov. 2020: 17°51.436S / 140°51.004W.** We dropped the hook in 14 meters of water. It took us three attempts to set the anchor and avoid the bommies – even with pearl floats. Loads of fun with the floats (putting them on, taking them off, rinse and repeat). Only 1 boat in this little protected area. – Sugar Shack

**June 2020:** After entering the pass, we sailed past the town and its harbour, which is too shallow for our 2.1m-draft boat. Just south of town is an anchorage northwest of a reef that extends about 300m into the lagoon. However, it's full of coral heads, so it's very likely your chain will get wrapped around them and your anchor stuck behind one. There are too many coral heads and it's too deep to float your chain with fenders effectively.

We sailed passed this first big reef. Two boats were anchored on the southwestern side of it. We passed them and went further south and found a shallow area (7-8m) just east of a very shallow area (1m), in front of a motu. The area also has coral heads, but if you use fenders on your chain, you can avoid them. The anchorage was very well protected from the fetch from the NW to NE. The snorkeling at those reefs was quite enjoyable.

We went to shore in our kayak over the shallow water. It gets very shallow and during low tide was almost too shallow even for our kayak. With a dinghy you are best off making a circle around the shallow water. There is a big sand pile on shore, which is where you can land. From there, you can walk to town in 15 minutes.

When the wind shifted, we sought shelter from southeasterly winds at the above-mentioned anchorage south of town. Although the protection from the fetch was good, it took a long time to get the anchor up from under a rock, so it's better to anchor at the outer ridge on the east side of Amanu in those conditions. – Luci Para 2

**Jan. 2019:** Near village, about 3/4-mile SE of the village there is anchorage that can hold 2 boats. Its offers good protection from some wind angles SW-ENE. – Jacaranda

**May 2010: 17°51.52' S / 140°51.21 W.** An approximate position inside the bay (See red dot in picture below)

I checked out two locations for anchoring in Amanu: The first is on the West side, a mile South of the pass. A large area of reef sticks out into the lagoon and behind it are two pocket bays protected from the North. The first one is deep, and does not look like it offers much for anchoring, but I saw a French boat anchored here.

The second bay is about 25 feet deep with lots of coral heads, including some that near the surface, so good light and careful thought is required in anchoring here. There is barely room to maneuver inside this little anchorage, so examine it from the outside and have a plan. This bay offers moderate protection from the East and South, and excellent protection from the North and West. It's completely exposed SE 5-mile fetch.





Entering the anchorage requires passing between the reef and several very shallow coral heads right along the edge of the shallow water. Just outside the bay it is 70+ feet deep.

**DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ANCHOR HERE IN BAD LIGHT AS THERE ARE DANGERS ALL AROUND YOUR BOAT!**

I anchored here 3 times, each time in a slightly different place due to the shifting winds. Twice I set two anchors to insure I did not swing onto the reef or a shallow coral head. NE of the red dot was too deep to anchor. The SW side of this "bowl" drops off too fast to be useful for anchoring. – Fellow Traveler

### **3.5.2.3 South & South East Anchorage**

**Jan. 2021:** S. & SE Anchorage **“Jan. 2021: 17°52.79S / 140°47.18W.** We anchored in good sand with a small reef to the north offering protection from the swell that can roll down the atoll. Friends anchored 2-3 miles further north to be able to kite. You can anchor almost anywhere on this side of Amanu. – Grace of Longstone

**Dec. 2020: 17°52.761S / 140°47.060W** Dropped the hook in 3 meters of water. Sandy bottom with really good holding. There are several scattered bommies but they are easy to see and maneuver around. We added 2 pearl floats then the bridle and enjoyed a calm spot than the Village anchorage during easterly winds.

**17°52.764S / 140°47.084W** Dropped in 5 meters of water, sandy bottom, great holding. We got a little wrap from the wind around the reef (winds out of 088T). However, if the winds shifted differently it would be great.

**17°51.322S / 140°45.997W** Friends anchored here. It had good protection from easterly winds. – Sugar Shack

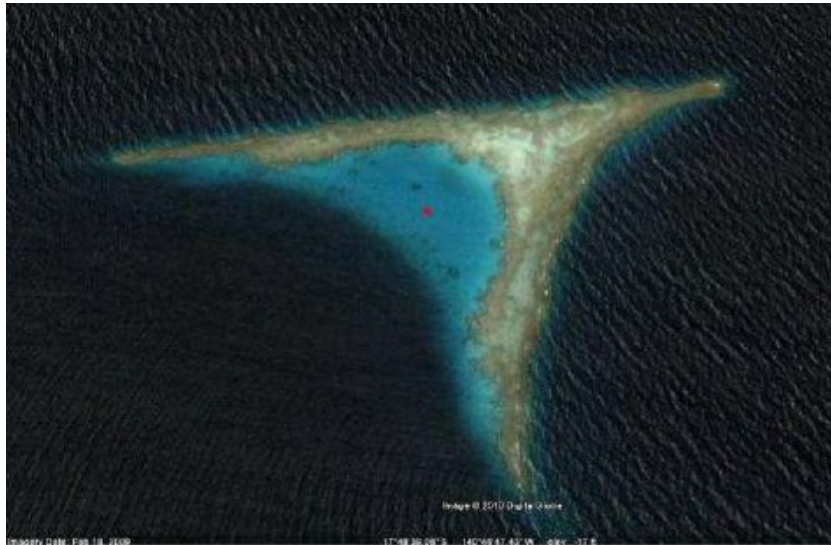
**June 2020: 17°52.863S / 140°47.264W.** Anchored in 10’-20’ of water protected from the eastern winds. We were with several other boats and found this anchorage very pleasant. – Hoodoo

**June 2017: 17°52.807S / 140°47.198W.** For winds with any East in them, there is a very good anchorage. Good holding in a sandy area with scattered, easily seen bommies. We spent a few nights there, very peaceful compared to the usual anchorage south of the village. South anchorage below (May 2010 Fellow Traveler) is good, but lots of rats ashore if you go to BBQ. – Duplicat

**May 2010: 17-54.72S / 140°50.5W** (see red dot below). The second spot I anchored is on the Southern edge of the lagoon. A sand spit extends out North, then West from the edge of the motus. On top of the sand spit it is 18 feet deep. It is a bit deeper between the spit and the shore. There are two very shallow coral heads at the East end of this spit; one can circle them in deep water. The top of the spit has many coral heads, so you can expect your chain to get tangled, particularly if the wind veers. There is plenty of room to swing without encountering any coral heads that would risk most boats (Fellow Traveler draws 6.5 feet). – Fellow Traveler



#### 3.5.2.4 Star Anchorage – Etoile Reef (in the middle of the lagoon)



**Dec. 2021: 17°48.656S / 140°46.797W.** Anchored in 4.7 meters of water in a sandy patch away from the obvious bommies. We had 12kts of SE wind when we arrived. But a squall came through blowing 18-20kts and we did not have any issues. There is a bit of a roll (even on our catamaran) all the time regardless of wind – it just rolls over the star reef. Super gorgeous spot. – Sugar Shack

**Jan. 2021: 17°48.17S / 140°46W** West side of the Star Reef. Locals refer to this as the “Belly Button” of Amanu. Tuck in behind the reef and float your chain. Space for maybe three boats max and it will feel quite tight. The holding has been described as variable but we found it to be good. There’s no land here. A special place, excellent shelter in N through to E winds, good snorkeling and kite surfing spot. – Grace of Longstone

**Jan. 2019:** We spent a number of nights at the Star anchorage. It was very calm in 12-14 knots of breeze from the ENE and a slight bump when it got over 20 knots at high tide. One evening we had gusts to 30 and the anchor held fine. Back down hard to make sure your anchor is set as some boats have dragged. – Jacaranda

**June 2017:** We spent a number of nights at the Star anchorage. It was very calm in 12-14 knots of breeze from the ENE and a slight bump when it got over 20 knots at high tide. One evening we had gusts to 30 and the anchor held fine. Be sure to back down hard to make sure your anchor is set as some boats have dragged

We moved to the NE corner and spent 3 weeks there enjoying the peace and quiet. Lovely protected spot, excellent holding even when the winds were gusting 40. As the large squalls passed to the north of us the winds did clock around to the W-WNW for a number of hours and there was some bounce due to the 2-mile fetch but nothing alarming and it soon went back to the NE. – Duplicat

**2010: 17°48'S-140°46'W.** Locals said “go to the star shaped reef in the middle of the lagoon before you can claim to have arrived in Amanu” We did go for a day picnic and snorkeling and had a great time! Nice to have a local that knows the location of the isolated reefs even if they are pretty easy to spot! – Fellow Traveler

### **3.5.2.5 North Anchorage**

**Nov. 2021: 17°43.674S / 140°39.090W** dropped in 5.5 meters of sand next to a few large bommies (easily spotted from surface). Nice area, without a need for floats. Perfect during the NE winds providing a nice breeze, no fetch, or roll. – Sugar Shack

**Jan. 2021: 17°43.60S / 140°39.09W.** NE corner of Amanu. Lovely spot. Flat when the wind is N / NE. Great reef walks, fishing, octopus, crab and lobster finding. There are a couple of properties with locals around at the weekend. All were super friendly. Even in easterly winds there is a slight swell running SE down the atoll that affects the anchorages on the eastern side. – Grace of Longstone

**Jan. 2019:** We moved to the NE corner and spent 3 weeks there enjoying the peace and quiet. Lovely protected spot, excellent holding even when the winds were gusting 40. As the large squalls passed to the north of us the winds did clock around to the W-WNW for a number of hours and there was some bounce due to the 2-mile fetch but nothing alarming and it soon went back to the NE. – Jacaranda

**June 2017: 17°42.697S / 140 41.656W.** There’s also some good holding in sand just inside the northern blind pass. We spent the night there in light easterlies with no problems. Walked the reef on the outside of the pass going southwards for lobster but a bit too much tide to find any.

**17-42.819S / 140°39.760W.** We stopped at, just off the abandoned village and would have been happy staying the night - good holding though there are lots of bommies its fairly easy to find an area clear of them. There are any number of nice secure anchorages in sand along the northern edge of the atoll. – Duplicat

### **3.5.3 Yachtsmen Services**

#### **3.5.3.1 Fuel (Diesel / Gasoline)**

**Dec. 2020:** Technically, there are no fueling services in Amanu. However, we heard you might be able to purchase a small amount from Magasin Maiygo. Or you may be able to purchase directly from their “power station.” If you walk into the main town, the road perpendicular to the basin is a station where they have several 200-liter barrels of fuel. We couldn’t find anyone to ask if they would sell to cruisers. And when a small mono tried to get gasoline, they were told they had to wait for the supply ship. – Sugar Shack

**Jan. 2019:** There is technically no place to purchase fuel. However, a cruiser was able to obtain 20 liters of gasoline from a shop owner. There still is very little to NO supplies available here in Amanu. You can hire a speedboat for 15000xpf to make a run over and back to Hao. Could share the cost amongst a few cruisers, if you were desperate. – Jacaranda

### **3.5.4 General Services**

#### **3.5.4.1 Le Mairie**

**Dec. 2020:** Le Mairie (Mayor) Hours: Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri: 0730-1130 & 1330-1530. Wed: 0730-1130. It is a two-story white building with green roof. Facing the entrance, Le Maire is on the left, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. The mayor, Francois is the youngest mayor in all of French Polynesia and France! He is also the local nurse. – Sugar Shack

#### **3.5.4.2 Gendarmerie**

Located upstairs in Le Mairie which is a two-story white building with a green roof adjacent to the harbor.

**Feb. 2021:** As a courtesy, especially during Covid, report to the gendarmerie on arrival. – Ari B

#### **3.5.4.3 Medical Clinic**

**Dec. 2020:** In the center of town is the clinic. Hours: Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri: 0730-1130 & 1330-1530. Wed: 0730-1130. It is a two-story white building with green roof. Facing the entrance, the hospital is on the right, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Francois is the nurse (who is also the mayor). – Sugar Shack

#### **3.5.4.4 Post Office**

**Dec. 2020:** OPT (Post Office) +689 40 96 91 02. Hours: Mon-Fri: 0730-0930. Located near the pass and the church. – Sugar Shack

#### **3.5.4.5 Wifi**

**Jan. 2021:** There is wifi available at the Marie outside of working hours on weekdays (1530-0700) and on weekends. Otherwise it is 2G on the atoll but we could pick this up everywhere by hoisting our vini box up the mast in a bag. Slow, but enough to get email headers and WhatsApp. – Grace of Longstone

**Dec. 2020:** Le Mairie (town hall) offers free wifi access on week day nights between 1600-0800 and on the weekends. We anchored south of the village and were able to get 2G on our Vini box but it was sporadic and required a lot of patience. We did not go into the village to try it closer because the winds were such that it would have been a wet and wild ride. – Sugar Shack

**June 2020:** The town hall has good free wifi on weekdays from 15:30h - 7:00h and all weekend. – Luci Para 2

### **3.5.5 Provisions**

**Feb. 2021:** There are two shops, as previously reported by Sugar Shack, and another. The second shop is located in a small dirt road opposite the small concrete jetty on the west side of the harbor. They have small selection of staples and some frozen foods. There are two supply ships, the Maris Stella III and the Taporo VIII. It is sometimes possible to buy fresh and vegetables from the ship. You can order on the Maris Stella, see [Supply Ship Schedules](#) at the beginning of the compendium. – Ari B

**Jan.2021:** There are two shops. Both are limited to staples. We preordered some veggies by texting the Maris Stella (no acknowledgement from them) and got potatoes, onions, carrots, apples and eggs. It was a slightly uncomfortable experience as we realized that our order wasn't fulfilled using produce brought in addition to the usual amount of produce brought by the supply ship. The boat staff weighed out our orders then what was left was available to the locals. Having taken kilos of produce that would have been available for locals to buy, we'd recommend coming as stocked up as you can. We had

assumed that pre ordering would mean that we were not competing with the locals for fresh produce but the reality was that pre ordering created a worse situation. And as long as the Maris Stella continues to operate this way, we would caution against pre ordering from the ship. Anecdotally, we have since heard that this has also happened in Rarioia with produce ordered through the magasin. – Grace of Longstone

**Dec. 2020:** Magasin Maiaygo Hours: 0630-1130 & 1530-1800. Location: From basin, turn right, on the right. They have a very limited supply of provisions and no fresh goods. We did not see any frozen meats or beer. But they were friendly. – Sugar Shack

**June 2020:** The town has two shops (one of them with freezer/fridge). We were asked by a patrol boat from Hao to check in at the town hall, so bring your passports and boat papers. The shops did not have fresh food and vegetables. One had eggs after the Taporo had come and the other (off the main road, with a freezer), reported to get some fresh food with the next supply ship. – Luci Para 2

**May 2017:** There is a small shop in the village with very basic supplies. It is located by the small boat harbor, about the last building as you walk out of town going South. – Duplicat

### **3.5.6 Cruiser Reports**

**Jan.2021:** We had a very enjoyable stay of about one month in Amanu. It's a relatively small atoll and if the wind changes direction it's a short sail across the atoll to find better protection. Around 230 people live on the atoll, this varies depending on the school year as some of the older children go to school in Hao then Tahiti. The mayor is the youngest ever appointed both in France and French territories. He's now in his third term and is responsible for progressive development throughout the atoll. Lots of work was going on in the small harbor to build a new dock and reinforce the breakwater and harbor walls. – Grace of Longstone.

**Dec. 2020:** We really enjoyed exploring the motus near the anchorage south of the pass. There are little passages between the reef where you can take your dinghy up to the closest motu, then walk north toward town. You can either take the road or walk along the beach all the way to town (about 1-1.5 miles each way). You do cross over several bodies of water, but they are usually never higher than your mid-calf. Very pleasant walk. If you are looking at Navionics chart the village Ikitake is on the motu just south of pass Fafameru. Just south of this motu is a really small diamond shaped motu. Just south of that is a rather large motu (I could not find its name). We dinghied to the large motu, cross the water to the small one, then cross the water again to the village motu. You will be able to walk to town on the road or the beach. – Sugar Shack

**June 2020:** The locals play volleyball, football and basketball in the afternoons. They were all friendly, even a bit shy. – Luci Para 2

**June 2017:** The Mayor of Amanu is incredibly welcoming - invited all the cruisers to a lunch as due to weather a bunch of us arrived from Gambier around the same time and they'd never seen so many yachts. We also had dinner with some locals who had taken us spear fishing and lobster hunting. A farewell dinner was arranged for when we left, and they presented us with wonderful necklaces. Truly, a wonderful place to visit with locals that really take you to their hearts. If you're anywhere close, do not miss Amanu! -- Duplicat

## **3.6 Tatakoto (No Pass, Marginal Anchorage)**

Guidebooks:

- South Pacific Anchorages, 2nd Ed, pg 23
- Charlie's Charts 5th ed, Pg 62

### 3.6.1 Anchorages and Moorings

**Please float your chain!** Protect the coral and prevent future damage to marine life!

And save yourself the hassle of having to unwrap your chain. Simply use fenders or old pearl farm floats (See “Anchoring Around Coral”).

Anchorage is reported to be possible in favorable conditions on the coral shelf off the village at the west end of the atoll. – South Pacific Anchorages

Reports that anything south of 17-20S is part of the nuclear testing restricted area, so they do not cover Tatakoto. (other more recent reports say only Mururoa and Fangatafu are off limits). —Charlie’s Charts

### 3.6.2 Cruiser Reports

**2008:** Pauline, a student we’d met in Gambier, had invited us to her home on Tatakoto – a remote atoll with only 200 villagers. There’s no pass into the lagoon so the anchorage is on the coral shelf on the outside edge of the atoll. Not the best anchoring. That, and the atoll’s remote location 400 miles north of Gambier on the eastern edge of the Central Tuamotus, is why the last sailboat visited Tatakoto four years before.

The anchoring did feel dangerous to us. So, I stayed aboard while Alene swam ashore on a pool raft (to the great amusement of the locals). She spent the day meeting Pauline’s family, touring the island, and being showered with gifts. She returned to the boat with a whole tuna, an octopus, wood carvings, shell necklaces, woven handbags and hats. The tales of generosity of the Polynesian people are definitely true. – Migration

## 4 NW Tuamotus from SE to NW

A typical trip through the NW Tuamotus for cruisers going from the Marquesas to Tahiti:

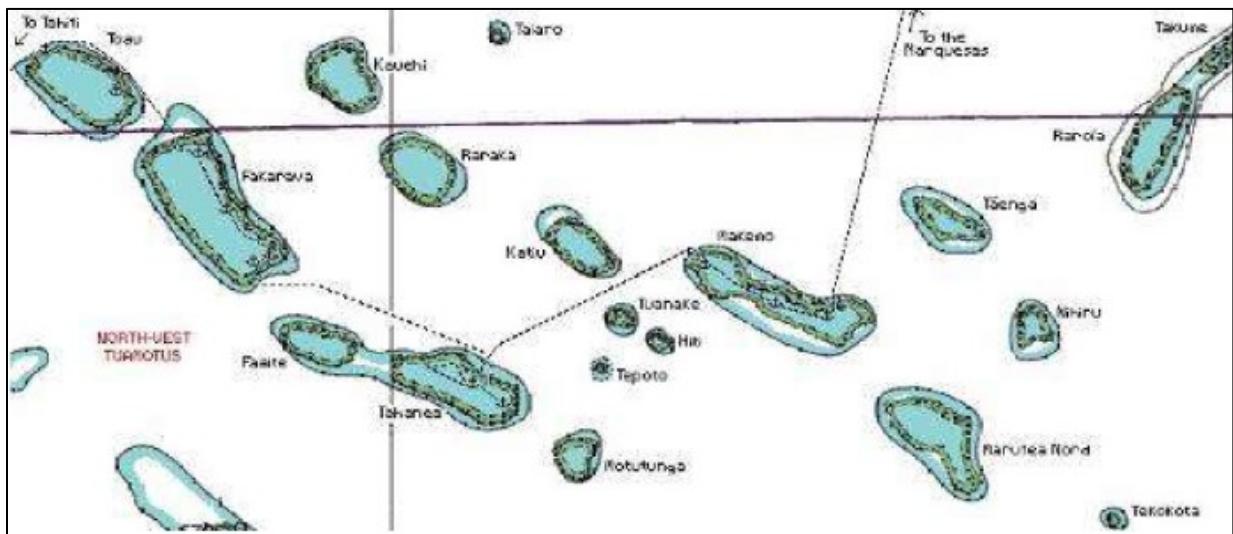


Figure 1 A typical trip through the NW Tuamotus for cruisers going from the Marquesas to Tahiti.

## 4.1 Haraiki (Iffy Pass)

### Guidebooks:

- South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 24: There is a narrow pass, 3m deep, at the south point of the atoll between two islets. The pass faces due south and is hazardous because of heavy rollers. (more in the guidebook).

## 4.2 Makemo (Pass, Some Supplies, Wifi, ATM)

### Guidebooks:

- South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 25
- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed; pages 98-99
- Guide to Navigation and Tourism – no coverage

### 4.2.1 Passes

Makemo has 2 passes.

- NW West pass "Passe Tapuhiria"
- East pass "Passe Arikitamiro" (near the main village)

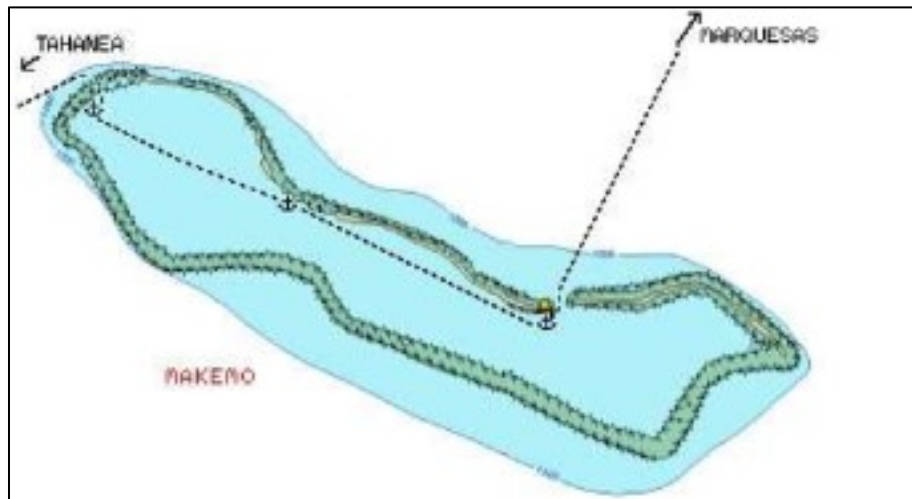


Photo courtesy of s/v Ocelot

**Nov. 2019:** We timed the entrance into the Pass of Tapuhiria beautifully and sailed in with no current or issues. However, despite our best efforts to time our exit it didn't go so well. We made several trips to the pass in our dinghy over multiple days to determine slack tide on our exit (and used the Guestimator). As we were pulling up the anchor, we realized we were caught on coral (despite using floats). By the time we got off the coral a squall came through. We waited for the squall to pass and hit the pass with another boat about an hour after our designated time (crap!). It was a \$hit show and we had standing waves coming over our bow with waves and current pushing us all over the pass. Our friends in a smaller catamaran had an even rougher time. So be warned and be careful. – Sugar Shack

**July 2010:** We came in the East pass (Arikitamiro) after an overnight from Tahanea. Because the wind died off, we missed the slack current by about an hour, and opted to go ahead in against the outgoing current, because the wind was light and was NOT opposing the current.

We entered the pass from the west side, as close as we could get into shore (we draw 5.5 feet). The current was running 4-6 knots. We stayed as far out of the main stream as possible (to the right) and had our boat at full throttle and at times were only making ½ a knot. It was a little tricky steering in the eddies, but we have a strong reliable engine, and we were never scared. – Soggy Paws

#### **4.2.2 Anchorages and Moorings**

**Please float your chain!** Protect the coral and prevent future damage to marine life!

And save yourself the hassle of having to unwrap your chain. Simply use fenders or old pearl farm floats (See “Anchoring Around Coral”).

##### **4.2.2.1 Village Anchorage**

**Nov. 2019:** **16°37.595S / 143°34.202W** and **16°37.589S / 143°34.288W**. We found a sandy spot in 5 meters of waters close to the pier. Village Anchorage, we returned and anchored in a different spot as the National Marine Boat was med-moored to the main dock (and close to our original anchorage). – Sugar Shack

**Warning:** **16°37.610S / 143°34.245W**. AVOID anchoring near the wreck!

**Jan. 2019:** **16°37.599S; 143°34.259W**. The village anchorage has a number of poor holding reports, but in the NE winds with squalls this evening we are very comfortably anchored in 13 feet of water in a good but small spot with deep sand. We used a single pearl farm float. The boat hovers over a piece of steel wreckage that appears to be a small aft deck section of a trawler replete with its round steel deck hatch. – Nehenehe

**Oct. 2018:** The village anchorage, west of the wharf, seemed good to us. We were there with two other boats, all on bow anchors only. There were many bommies on the bottom, and it was difficult to find any sizable patch of sand. But we (and they) held OK, under the light conditions we had. The difficulties we had were mostly from the light and variable winds, we drifted together in circles. We left with a forecast of stronger conditions to come. Snorkeling in the harbor is fun, there's a wreck on the bottom just south of the reef. Mostly flattened, but a 2-cylinder diesel with gearbox, a windlass and some anchor chain are readily identifiable. – Kokopeli

**July 2010:** **16°37.6S / 143°34.3W**. The anchorage off the town at Makemo (inside the E pass) is not good in strong winds, especially winds from the SE. We anchored with a coral bottom, with thin sand, and a lot of coral heads. There is protection from the N around to the E and just to the ESE, but in strong winds it gets very choppy. We ended up going into the dock—bow in—with 3 bow lines out to the nice stainless-steel rings on the concrete pier, and 2 stern lines out. At one point in the strong winds, there were 2 monohulls, 4 charter cats, and 1 supply boat on the leeward side of the pier. – Soggy Paws

##### **4.2.2.2 Punaruku Anchorage**

**July 2022:** Like Hoodoo we dropped in 10' of sand and didn't need floats. We found the coral to be mostly dead, but it was a lovely place to paddleboard. – Villa Veritas



**Dec. 2020: 16°31.100S / 143°49.300W** Dropped the anchor in 10' of sand and no floats were needed. This anchorage is 10 miles from the pass and about 20 miles from the village where the reef sticks out. The anchorage is very pretty. – Hoodoo

**Oct. 2018: 16°31' S, 143°41' W.** Once inside, with the sun behind us, we elected to continue to the Punaruku anchorage, dropping the hook. The reef to the east here is much more extensive than Navionics indicates. It extends farther from shore, and is essentially awash. – Kokopeli

**April 2010: 16°31.1S / 143°49.3W.** The best anchorage in all of Makemo. This doesn't look very protected on the chart, but there is a small reef that comes out from the motu just south of this spot, which makes a nice protected cove from NE to SE. There is a nice beach along the shore. – Visions of Johana

#### **4.2.2.3 Other Anchorages**

**June 2022:** We tried to anchor in Ari B's bay south of the West pass, but couldn't find a sandy spot big enough to drop in, even with floats. It had protection from E winds, which our fallback at roughly 16°26.8S, 143°57.1W did not; we left on the next slack instead of waiting for the next day's pass-diving window. – Villa Veritas

**May 2020: 16°27.1S / 143°58W.** We anchored in the small bay south of the west pass 16°27.1S 143°58W. There are patches of sand amongst the very tall bommies, so pick your spot carefully and floating your chain is a must. Nice snorkeling around the anchorage and in the pass especially at the north west end of the pass where a back eddy keeps you out of the current on the flood. – Ari B

**Jan. 2019: 16°36.2427S / 143°38.5376W.** We anchored a bit more toward the village in 12 feet of water with good holding and protection from the North to East winds that evening. This spot had an unoccupied home very close by and we just spent an evening there before heading to town.

**16°29.4660S / 143°49.5890W.** We also found good shallow water anchorages protected from the moderate NE winds on the east end (north side), this was on a very wide sandy flat in 8.5 feet of water. It is a beautiful spot with a good dingy landing area. – Nehenehe

**Sept. 2018: 16°26.596S / 143°56.971W.** There is a 50\*30m 14m deep sand patch. Well protected in E-N-SW, but not a good place in a strong SE. – Moana

**July 2010: 16°39.3S / 143°23.5W.** Southeast anchorage, some charter catamarans looking for protection from a howling east wind in July anchored. This is at the end of the easternmost long motu. There is a little bit of a beach there and some trees to block some of the wind. – Soggy Paws

**April 2010: 16°27.21S / 143°57.91W.** We also anchored near the west pass at this spot. You have to work your way into this area from the SE in good light, but once inside there is a reasonable anchorage protected from most directions by small patch reefs. It is convenient to the pass (for diving).

**16°42.8S / 143°28.1 W.** Also anchored at in milder conditions. – Visions of Johanna

#### **4.2.2.4 Navigational Hazards in Lagoon**

**June 2017:** We spent two weeks at the Makemo Atoll and while navigating inside the motu we discovered many uncharted bommies. We traveled from the East Pass to East corner, then to the West pass. (30 miles)

I am using the most current Navionics as of my purchase and download a few months ago. Most of the bommies were indicated spot on but I found several that were not.

In publishing this I do not want to deter people from visiting Makemo. It is an amazing atoll. One must take the precautions when navigating within the atoll. On Shindig my wife is a spotter from the bow and

we communicate with a hand-held VHF to point out any obstacles. The bommies are easy to see with the sun behind you in settled weather. – Shindig

*Ed note: Anyone navigating inside atolls should be using Satellite charts and “Mark I Eyeballs”. NONE of the chart plotting offerings are spot on all the time.*

#### **4.2.3 Yachtsmen Services**

##### **4.2.3.1 Cooking Gas (Propane / Butane)**

**Nov. 2019:** Propane bottle can be purchased from Magasin Chez Tupana and Opareke Market. – Sugar Shack

##### **4.2.3.2 Fuel (Diesel / Gasoline)**

**June 2022:** Diesel is available at a cheaper price from Magasin Chez Tupana. You can bring your dinghy to the beach near 16°37.61’S / 143°34.85’W (about 0.2 NM east of the abandoned wind farm). Then walk through the trees to the store. -- Migration

**Nov. 2019:** Fuel is available in small quantities from the Opareke Market (the largest magasin). You can also buy directly off the supply ship if you are lucky enough to be around when it arrives. – Sugar Shack

**July 2010:** Fuel is available in small quantities from the big store—most of the time. But we bought ours directly off the supply boat at a much better price. But they would only accept CFP. – Soggy Paws

##### **4.2.3.3 Trash and Recycling**

**Nov. 2019:** Recycling for cans has a large bin near Le Mairie (cannettes). There are green recycling bins along the street. Trash cans (purple and green) are located all along the streets. – Sugar Shack

#### **4.2.4 General Services**

##### **4.2.4.1 Air Tahiti**

**Nov. 2019:** +689 40 980 236. Take street by Le Maire, then make 1<sup>st</sup> right, then 1<sup>st</sup> left. On left. – Sugar Shack

##### **4.2.4.2 Bank / ATM**

**May 2020:** The ATM at the post office works and was also working on our previous visit in July 2019. – Ari B

**Nov. 2019:** The ATM at the post office was not working when we visited. However, Magsin Opareke changed USD into XPF and accepted credit cards. – Sugar Shack

**Aug. 2016:** One boat reported being able to get a cash advance on a Visa card at a grocery store in Makemo. We are happy to report that Makemo, just last week, received an ATM at the Post Office. It is quite amusing to watch the complete lack of users for it. I rather think that the Post Office ladies are preferable than the devil's box in the wall! Perhaps it is a gambit to attract more sailors. Certainly, the people we learnt from, that the ATM was about to arrive on the next ferry, was a French boat who had heard about the big event all the way down at Hao. They stopped in here just to use it having run out of funds. – Skylark

##### **4.2.4.3 Hardware Supplies**

Located across from Opareke Market. Small selection of hardware & home goods.

#### 4.2.4.4 Laundry

Laverie +689 87 243 404. Same road as Opareke Market closer to water.

#### 4.2.4.5 Le Mairie

+689 40 980 255. Located near poste and police. Right from dinghy dock, past artisan market.

#### 4.2.4.6 Police / Gendarmerie

+689 87 276 589. Located near poste office (OPT).

#### 4.2.4.7 Post Office (OPT)

+689 40 980 222. Located on the wharf (right hand side, yellow building). Hours Mon, Wed, Thurs: 0700-1130 & 1300-1500. Tues. 0700-1130. Fri, 0700-1300. Closed Tuesday afternoon, Sat-Sun.

#### 4.2.4.8 Wifi

**Nov. 2019:** Wifi: Manaspot and GoogleFi. The post office also offers limited wifi access. – Sugar Shack

**2019:** The Post Office was all out of Wi-Fi cards but might possibly have some again in four days.... So, it's not just the food stuffs that get low around town! – Nehenehe

**2018:** GoogleFi worked. – Kokopeli

**2018:** No Mananet wifi. – Moana

#### 4.2.5 Provisions

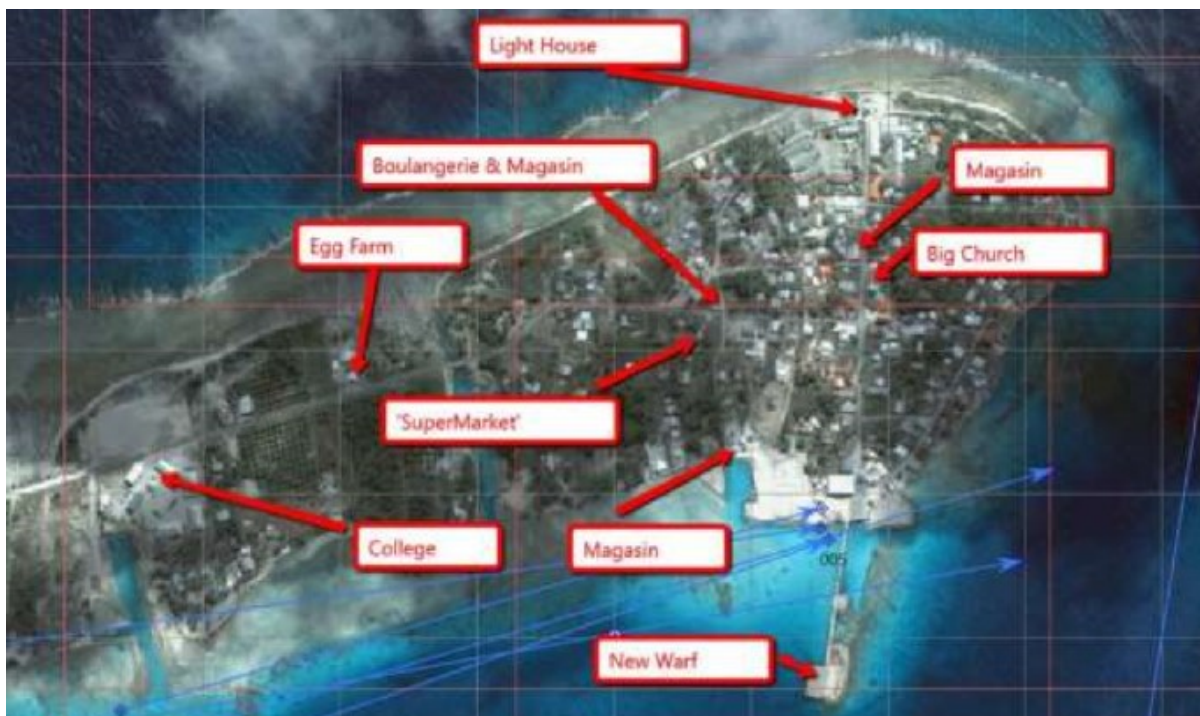


Photo courtesy of Nehenehe Jan 2019

**Opareke Market** +689 40 980 218. Mon-Fri: 0600-1300 & 1530-1830. Sat. 0600-12 & 1530-1830. Sun: 0600-12. Located near the Magasin Toa Mauri & Boulangerie. Go to Magasin Toa, across the street is a

road that is perpendicular to the bakery. Turn there and Opareke is the 3<sup>rd</sup> gate on the left. Largest magasin in the village and offers a decent selection of fresh goods immediately after the supply ship. They also sell a lot of American brands (canned goods, sweets, etc...).

**Magasin Toa Mauri & Boulangerie Makemo** +689 40 980 247 or +689 87 783 408. Mon-Sat: 0530-1200 & 1500-1830. Located on the first street parallel to the water. One block up, turn left and 2-3 blocks down on right side. You can order baguettes, croissants and bread the day before with Noeline or the owner.

**Magasin Chez Tupana.** +689 40 98 03 33 Hours: Mon-Sat: 0600-1200 & 1600-1800. Limited hours Oct-Nov: Mon-Sat: 0730-1130. Located on Moturama motu (just past windfarm). They sell propane and sometimes refill. They sometimes have local vegetables or those flown in by plane.

**Magasin Florence** +689 40 980 376. Location: Road between Le Maire, cross main road, on left at next intersection.

**Magasin Chez Flo** +689 98 03 76 Is a small store, but it does offer a snack shop. Located on the street east of the main church.

**Veggie Farm** +689 40 980 216. Located near magasin Toa Mauri (Bakery). Facing market, take left on main road, take first dirt road to right. House/farm located on right at water's edge. Owner Jack Belkaroubi

**Egg Farm - Oeufs Frais De Makemo** +689 87 243 404. Located on main road heading toward windfarm. Sign is only visible coming from the other direction. It is located just before you cross over to Motu Tamara. *In 2023, this was reported "phone number no good, farm probably closed".*

#### **4.2.5.1 Provisions Cruiser Report**

**Jan. 2019:** The Stores and Village Pouheva: Pouheva has three Marches; one "Super Market" and an "Egg Farm" (The 'Super Market is called Opareke Market and is the best and largest Marche, it has way more stuff when the other three markets start to have bare shelves). The village is large by Tuamotus standards and is very clean and tidy with an 'integrated paint scheme' of purple, green, yellow, and white on many continuous cement balustrades that line some of the main streets. There were two schools and what were told was a college, all are very well loved and cared for.

Though completely different from Rotoava... it was still reminiscent of the somewhat European sense of orderliness that predominates the two towns. For a town this large, I found it vaguely odd that 2-1/2 weeks since the last supply ship.... all the shelves are well over half bare.

For a very large town like this; I would describe what we found to be the least well supplied group of magasins that we have seen in two months of cruising the Tuamotus.

The 'Egg Farm' has a 2'x 1.5' sign outside but it can only be read coming from the west and looking at its west face. I don't recall exactly other than it had the French "Oeufs" in the name and they have a chicken farm with lots of eggs. 500pf per dozen and super nice proprietors.

The Magasin furthest to the west also appears to be the bakery since there were lots of empty shelving where the banquets and loves appear to normally reside. The Supermarket is a bit harder to find than the other stores but is overwhelmingly better stocked and they insisted that we let them drive us back to the small boat harbor with all our bags. – Nehenehe

**July 2010:** We found one large-ish and 3 other 'Magazin' (grocery stores). We thought provisioning in N Fakarava was much better. Even with the supply ship here, there wasn't much. – Soggy Paws

#### **4.2.6 Restaurants**

**Snack Chez Flo** (near Magasin Chez Flo) +689 40 980 376

**BBQ Snack**, Barraque Vaima at border of Opareke and Tamara motus (near bridge). Hours: Mon-Sat: 1900-0200. More of a bar than a snack shack. You can take dinghy up river and tie to tree or beach it.

**Snack shop** across from bakery is tasty, serves large portions at reasonable prices. Hours Mon-Sat: 1730-2000.

**Snack Shop** near Opareke Market Mon-Fri 11-13 & 1730-1930. Sat. 1730-1930. Offers steak, hamburgers, hotdogs chicken 1000-1400 xpf

There are several **snacks** in same area as Opareke Market including Tukua & Opareke Grill Bar

#### **4.2.7 Activities**

##### **4.2.7.1 Diving and Snorkeling**

**Nov. 2019: 16°37.610S / 143°34.245W.** The village has pieces of a wooden boat wreck that is fun to snorkel on. Some have seen a small aft deck section of a trawler with its round steel deck hatch. Further towards shore is a 2-cylinder diesel gearbox. – Sugar Shack

**2018:** We snorkeled the west side, the east might have been better, but rougher with the east winds. There seemed to be a copra camp ashore, with two men working it. We chatted with them, very pleasant and friendly. They welcomed us to explore ashore. – Kokopeli

##### **4.2.7.2 Points of Interest**

- **Artisan Market** +689 87 233 287. Located to the right of the dinghy dock. Oval, enclosed gazebo at wharf. Lovely shell jewelry, handmade hats, purses and more.
- **Windfarm** has 6 defunct wind machines. Main road to east (left). Cross over from Opareke to Tamara and then to Moturama.
- **Light house** is located on the west side. Take road to the right from the dinghy dock. Past Le Maire and walk along coast to end.
- **Catholic church** has lovely services with an amazing choir. They sing like angels. On main street.

#### **4.2.8 Cruiser Reports**

**July 2019:** There was a festival in the village when we visited with participants from the nearby islands all competing. All the small buildings near the dock were decorated with palm fronds and opened as restaurants in the evening. There were different activities each day including Miss Makemo, a sports day and traditional Polynesian dancing and music. – Ari B

**Oct. 2018:** We then continued on to the town at Makemo. We used Navionics charting on our MFD, and were following friends who had satellite photos. Navionics seemed to chart most of the bommies/reefs we passed, but they were usually shallower than indicated, usually awash. So easy to see, in daylight. We also kept on person on the foredeck with a handheld VHF, polarized sunglasses, etc. What we saw enroute was easy to see, the bommies I've noticed that don't come near the surface seem to be mostly near the shore, in shallower water. We did pass one submerged pearl float string along the way to the village.

The village was very nice. It was tidy, and the friendliest place I've ever been. Provisioning was good, I got some wifi off my Fi Phone. I had heard that one store had great wifi, but we must have asked the

wrong one? We had dinner one night at ??, food was good, service excellent (Moana). Their eye-catching placemats were from a "Punaruks Plage/Punaruks Beach Pearls - Makemo" operation. This was not evident when we were in Punaruks, but maybe operates sometimes. – Kokopeli

### **4.3 Taenga (Iffy Pass)**

#### **Guidebooks:**

- South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 24:
- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; page 96

#### **4.3.1 Pass**

**Taenga has one pass called Passe Tiritepakau.** There is only 2m at the entrance (more in guidebook South Pacific Anchorages).

### **4.4 Takume (No Pass)**

#### **Guidebook**

- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; page 100

### **4.5 Raroia (Pass, Small Village, Minimal Supplies)**

#### **Guide Book:**

- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: Charles and Margo Wood, 5th ed 2005; pages 100-101 for description and sketch map

Raroia is about 450 miles due south of Nuku Hiva in the Marquesas, and is often a first landfall for boats from the Marquesas. It is about 49 miles north of Makemo and 5 miles SW of Takume.

This is the atoll that the raft Kon Tiki finished its epic voyage from Easter Island in 1947.

Please note that fish deemed "safe and clear of ciguatera" one year have been found to have the disease. Ask locals what fish are safe to eat it changes frequently.

#### **4.5.1 Pass**

**Raroia has one pass near Tenukuhaupaatea.**

**Feb. 2021:** As with many other passes, if the ebb is strong and there are standing waves outside the pass, it is possible enter from the side, in this case the north westerly side and enter the pass just upstream of the standing waves. – Ari B

**Nov. 2018:** We elected to do an overnight motor to get over here, from Makemo, and make some more easting in light conditions. We arrived on the morning flood before-slack, and got in without problems. We went down the channel along the motus to the village, and anchored a bit beyond it in shallow water, off the airport. Lots of bommies, and an out-of-service pearl farm horizontal line that was deep enough that we passed over it without problem. – Kokopeli

**Aug. 2016:** I had been in Raroia 25 years ago and I was the only boat in the atoll at the time so was excited to return and show Linda her first atoll in the Tuamotus. We arrived off the pass at 06:00 and entered an hour before slack water with an outflow of 2-3 knots at 6:30am in heavy overcast and rain.

Rarioa was on the cruiser track this year so that there were about 10-12 boats in the lagoon at the time we arrived.

The pass is very straight forward, short and well charted. Staying to the north side will keep you out of most of the current and standing waves (if you don't time the pass right).

Note: A few days after we departed the wind had been strong 20+ kts for a few days along with a big S swell. The large supply ship tried entering the pass and usually they power thru the passes with not much concern over slack water. They ended up backing out of the pass as they could not make it into the lagoon due to the outflowing current. The ship waited 2 hours and went in reporting 8 knots out flowing current.

It is best to NOT enter with tide against wind as that can create large standing waves. This means for Rarioa if it is windy from the E or SE, its best to enter either at the start of an ebb or at the end of an ebb. In addition, as has been pointed out earlier if there is a large swell running this will also push a lot of water in the lagoon. In windy conditions slack water may only be a few minutes or not at all. – Jacaranda

#### **4.5.2 Anchorages and Moorings**

**Please float your chain!** Protect the coral and prevent future damage to marine life!

And save yourself the hassle of having to unwrap your chain. Simply use fenders or old pearl farm floats (See "Anchoring Around Coral").

##### **4.5.2.1 Village Anchorage**

There is a small village on the leeward side of the atoll, with not much protection from prevailing east winds.

**Aug. 2016:** We only anchored here one night in a NE breeze and found it reasonably protected. The bottom is littered with bommies and there were a number of boats anchored when we arrived forcing us into deeper water 45-50'. We did have trouble getting our anchor up when trying to leave early the next morning. The water is not clear so its best if you can anchor in shallower water where you can see and/or dive to clear your hook. Also, this anchorage is on the leeward side of the lagoon in normal trade wind conditions and can get very lumpy. Not our favorite anchorage in Rarioa.

We first anchored in a spot that we felt was far far away from the onshore pearl farm near the village but a boat came out and politely asked us to move away. We moved 60 meters further S towards the Ohuhe reef in 45-50'. No further requests to move. – Jacaranda

##### **4.5.2.2 Kon Tiki Anchorage**

**June 2022:** We anchored slightly south of the Kon Tiki anchorage, in a big enough sandy spot that we didn't need to float the chain. Nice snorkeling, lots of octopuses. We were the only boat in the atoll, and as we moved west we wished we had stayed longer. We tried a night dive but visibility was bad and the sharks were disconcertingly interested so we cut it short. – Villa Veritas

**Nov. 2018:** We anchored off the motus, south of the "Kon-Tiki Motu", in about 40' of water. Wind was up and down, rain, we went 350 degrees around our anchor. Visibility in the water was poor, so we had no interest in diving there. But when we were ready to leave, the chain came up without problem, and the anchor trailing a great plume of white sand. Guess we were OK. – Kokopeli

**Aug. 2016: 16°03.869S / 142°21.568W.** Eastern Side of the lagoon: The choice is yours where you want to anchor and can gain protection. The bottom is usually sand with some bommies. We usually floated our chain when anchoring. There are a number of hoa's (small inlets that let water flow into the lagoon)

along this side of the reef. We have found that at times there would be some current when anchored close to the hoas and in strong breeze could create some lumpy conditions.

This is a small motu where the Kon Tiki crash landed on the reef. There is now a small monument on the motu and is a favorite spot for beach BBQ's. Excellent Kite Boarding spot just to the S of this motu with a tiny sand beach for launching. If you can obtain the original B&W documentary by Thor Hyerdahl there is some footage of the Kon Tiki Motu.

**16°04.826S / 142°22.282W.** Pearl Farm (approximate--not sure of exact motu coordinates but south about 1km from Kon Tiki motu.) We dinghied down from where we were anchored about 1-mile further N. Interesting way to spend a few hours. They have a nice dock that you can tie your dinghy to and are very welcoming to cruisers. The woman who is in charge is a delightful lady (Gigi) from New Caledonia. When we stopped there to visit there were 12 Chinese grafters working inserting the starter graft. They do not sell the pearls as they have a shop in Papeete. We found it worthwhile. – Jacaranda

**July 2010: 16°03.85S / 142°21.68W** Anchored off the Kon-Tiki Monument island, 35' sand. – Soggy Paws

#### **4.5.2.3 Other Anchorages**

**Nov 2022:** There is a reef due south of the south end of the airport runway. It's about 1.5NM south of town. Provides good protection from WNW to ESE. Good holding. Lots of bommies but some decent sand patches. Excellent snorkeling around the reef. – Migration

**Nov. 2018:** We turned north at the pass, and carefully explored to anchor there. From the chartplotter (Navionics) it seemed to have a better shelf on the east side, and that the west side was steep-to. Mostly the water was 60' plus, but we found two interesting spots.

**16°00.45S / 142°26.70W.** Held OK, in coral. The other anchor spot is at the end of a sandbar/reef extending perpendicularly from the north end of the second motu north of the pass. It comes up to 35' pretty nicely, with deeper water all around. Water clarity is much better here.

**16°00.71S, 142°26.84W.** The bight between the motu adjoining the pass on the north side and the next motu north. It's discernable as a lighter-colored patch of water, but not as light as the awash reefs in the lagoon. We motored right over it; it comes up to about 35' where the surrounding is all 60' plus. It's probably hard coral, but if you could stick the anchor, you'd be OK with any wind shift. Navionics has a rock charted @ here.

Looking at this spot later, the best patch of sand is on the southwest side of the shallowest, most conspicuous, outcrop. These anchorages north of the pass are attractive if you're trying to drift dive in the pass.

We went all the way around our anchor here, in 10 to 20 kt. winds. Actually, this has happened a few times while we've been here in Raroia, almost like a diurnal pattern. But we're also here while a shear zone between two systems has been passing. Plan for this. Our chain, although floated, was snagged on a few coral heads. Required a dive to 70', but conditions were then light, visibility good, and no sharks noticed. Exploring the Tuamotus without dive gear would be problematic. – Kokopeli

**Aug. 2016:** North East Raroia: Due to the weather conditions we ended up spending a week or more on the north east part of the lagoon and really enjoyed it. The water was flat calm when we were there even though it was blowing NE 20+. Because the Motus are all tree covered the area was very protected. There were a few nice bommies to snorkel and the reef provided an interesting reef walk. Linda especially liked the inside of the motus in shallow water that contained lots of tropical reef fish, sharks, rays and octopus.

A couple places to anchor in the NE end.



- **15°56.975 S / 142 18.986 W** Where we anchored in 14' in a sandy spot. We floated the chain.
- **15°57.117S / 142 18.963 W** Larger sandy spot in about 15'. Anchor chain floated.
- **15°56.6976S / 142 19.0261W** Another boat anchored here. – Jacaranda

**July 2010:** Other anchorages. – Soggy Paws

- **16°03.49S / 142°21.47W** First anchorage, near '3 Palm Island', ok for lighter wind conditions.
- **16°04.78S / 142°22.31W** Pretty spot, moderate protection from strong winds
- **16°05.65S / 142°22.59W** Pearl Farm—watch for buoys. Some visible buoys and others submerged
- **16°06.26S / 142°22.67W** Nice anchorage, good protection, pretty spot
- **16°08.34S / 142°23.56W** Nice anchorage, good protection, pretty spot.

#### **4.5.3 Yachtsmen Services**

##### **4.5.3.1 Cooking Gas / Propane**

**May 2020:** Cooking gas is available at the magasin +689 87 30 14 27– Ari B

##### **4.5.3.2 Fuel (Diesel / Gasoline)**

**May 2020:** Gasoline is sometimes available from the ship. See provisions. – Ari B

**Aug 2016:** We have heard from Silent Son (Chris & Jes that have spent 6+ months here) that you can buy fuel from the pearl farm closest to the village. Also, you can buy diesel direct from the ship by the jug and gasoline in 200-liter drums (sharing amongst various cruising boats). – Jacaranda

##### **4.5.3.3 Fresh Water**

**April 2023:** There is a public water maker opposite the majors building, where you can get free drinking water three times a week in any amount. As cruisers, we should only access this if we really NEED it. But if you need water, it is helpful to be able to find it! – Freeirie

#### **4.5.4 General Services**

##### **4.5.4.1 Gendarmerie**

Gendarmerie +689 87 21 65 94. It is located opposite the post office. Turn left from harbor and it is on the right in the Le Mairie (town hall).

**Feb. 2021:** As a courtesy, especially during COVID, report to the gendarmerie on arrival. The very friendly gendarmie is Mr. Heremoana HITI and he speaks a little English. – Ari B

##### **4.5.4.2 Post Office**

Post Office is opposite Le Mairie. Turn left from the harbor and it is on the left side.

##### **4.5.4.3 Wifi**

**Feb. 2021:** A Vinispot is at the post office and cards are for sale. It was working slowly, whilst here. – Ari B

**Aug. 2016:** There is cell service at the village (Vini) and we were able to check email, etc using our internet stick (dongle) with a Vini data SIM card. You can get cell coverage in other parts of the lagoon

but it all comes from the tower at the village. Further away the less the signal strength. Remember everything is uplifted via satellite meaning SLOW. – Jacaranda

#### **4.5.5 Provisions**

**April 2023:** Raya and Gérard run a small shop in the village, where you get beer and ground provision. If necessary they accept Euro € or US \$. Emily lives behind the major building. She is selling eggs from her own chicken and some vegetables they grow in the community. – Freeirie

**Nov 2022:** There is a communal vegetable garden where you can buy veggies. Ask for Jean-Jacques. He is the school director. His house, as well as the garden, are behind the school. --Migration

**Magasin** +689 87 30 14 27. Located from the harbor take the main road about 100m, then look for the Hinano sign down a small dirt road to the right. Owner is Gerard and he and his wife speak English.

**May 2020:** There is one small shop that is reasonably well stocked with basic provisions, beer, wine, rum, limited fruit and vegetables (after supply ship) and frozen goods. Head straight down the main road from the harbor and after approximately 100m look for the Hinano sign down a small dirt road to the right. The owner Gerard and his wife speak English. Supply ship every 3 weeks (sometimes possible to buy from ship) – Ari B

**Aug. 2016:** The village is located about 1.5 miles from the pass in charted waters with a number of navigation aids. The village has a couple of magasins (small stores) that if stocked (recent supply ship) has a basic supply of items including frozen meats, milk, etc. No bakery here. Veggies are in short supply. – Jacaranda

##### **4.5.5.1 Provision Cruiser Report**

**June 2021:** Cautionary tale of ordering direct off the supply boat in the more remote Tuamotus (such as Toau). We and several other cruising boats spent a month in Amanu. This atoll is supplied by the Maris Stella. We used the phone number in the compendium to pre-order fruit and veggies. Our expectation was that these orders would be fulfilled and packages separately in Tahiti before arrival in Amanu. Our intention was to avoid depleting the islands supplies.

However, on arrival the ship set up the store as described in the compendium but fulfilled our orders from the stock they had brought for the island. It took a while for us to work out what was happening. It was very uncomfortable experience as the whole of the village was looking on.

Friends had the same thing happen in Raroia during lockdown although their experience was with a shop. Same story though. Ordering in advance meant they got what they wanted but it wasn't additional stock brought in. It did in fact leave less than the usual supplies for the locals.

Given the multiple options for online ordering (we used Sipac) I'd recommend cruisers do not make special arrangements in advance with supply boats on the remote atolls but rather place their own orders online through personal shoppers, and just use the supply boats for delivery. Or just bring plenty of veggies in advance or buy local. – Grace of Longstone

#### **4.5.6 Activities**

##### **4.5.6.1 Diving and Snorkeling**

**April 2016:** Nice Snorkeling Bommies (nothing like the pass but still a nice collection of fish). – Jacaranda

**16°04.498 S / 142°22.202 W** About 1/4-mile S of the SP's anchorage waypoint

**16°03.745 S / 142°21.692 W** Close to Kon Tiki Motu

#### 4.5.7 Cruiser Reports

**April 2023:** We spent a good time Rarioa, made friends and got invited to a polynesian wedding there. Havini and Karen live in the center of the village. They like foreigners and are helpful with all kind of informations, little tours, fishing and even some emergency repairs. – Freeirie

**Nov. 2018:** We went ashore and found Regis and his new wife Tanea. Also, her daughters and his mother, very great folks. He's growing vegetables, all is good. No usable cellular data here. But weather was threatening, so we left and went across the lagoon. It was flat calm and the light was not good (afternoon sun), which turned out to be difficult. The reflections of the clouds completely obscured seeing anything underwater. But we were following friends with satellite images, and made it OK. – Kokopeli

**May 2017:** Not all coral patches are on the maps/nor easily visible (we hit one on our crossing from the entrance pass to Kon Tiki motu). With cloudy weather it is really hard to see the patches. Have a look at the pearl farm and bring them some fruit from the Marquesas, they appreciate it! – Spunky

**Aug. 2016:** Track from the pass to eastern side of the lagoon from SV Beach House, SV Mabruka and SV Jacaranda. (Updated by Jacaranda May 2019)

The entrance to the lagoon on our charts says "Unsurveyed". Don't be alarmed, it's all deep except for the slightly submerged bommies that are clearly visible after 9 a.m. sunlight.

These waypoints will get you from the inside of the pass over to the eastern side of the lagoon. For those that enter as we did at 06:30am, in rain and bad light it is helpful but you still need someone on deck watching.

Beware if you are departing from the village--a direct track across the lagoon will put you in the middle of a pearl farm. There are pearl farms on the south part of the lagoon. Just an FYI to beware.

After entering the pass, I moved over to the north side of the pass where the current was less.

**As with all the waypoints in this guide, use at your own risk and with a lookout on the bow!**

- 16°01.0134 S 142 27.1706 W Inside the pass
- 16°00.7000 S 142 26.7000 W #1
- 16°00.7182 S 142 26.5393 W #2
- 16°01.9115 S 142 24.6895 W #3
- 16°03.1517 S 142 23.4150 W #4
- 16°03.4909 S 142 23.0224 W #5
- 16°04.2670 S 142 22.0060 W #6 Anchor

This year the weather was terrible while in Rarioa and after 3 weeks we counted 2-3 good days that did not include rain, very windy conditions, major wind changes or convergence zone crossing over us. – Jacaranda

**July 2010:** We stopped in Rarioa mainly as the eastern-most jumping off point for sailing to the Marquesas. We had a nice overnight motorsail from Makemo, between fronts in light east wind, and thought we had a good weather window within a day or so, to head for the Marquesas. However, the High below us strengthened up, and all of a sudden, the forecast of 15 kts SE changed to 20-25kts ESE-E. So instead of spending a night or two in Rarioa, we ended up spending over a week there.

However, the good news is that it is a lovely atoll. We headed straight east from the pass without stopping in the town. In July, the sun is far enough north, even in the morning, that it wasn't hard to see and avoid the isolated coral reefs in the very deep surrounding water.

With some time on our hands, we started searching for the Kon-Tiki landing spot. Unfortunately, we hadn't done any research before we left the internet, and the location shown on Charlie's Charts was not specific enough to be useful. Finally, we begged a computer-savvy friend back in the U.S. to do some internet research for us. He found (with great difficulty) a waypoint, and an article about a monument dedication held in 2007. Unfortunately, the waypoint was out in the middle of the reef—perhaps Kon-Tiki's first resting place. But a photo from the article finally led us to the correct motu that had the monument. Waypoints are listed above for our various anchorages.

Waypoints for Kon-Tiki sites:

- 16°03.87S / 142°21.546 The Kon-Tiki Monument (inland on island)
- 16°03.87S / 142°21.56W Purported location of Kon-Tiki (on the reef)

We did all our navigating close in along the eastern side of the atoll. In July, the sun transits a course pretty far north, so the best time to go NORTH along the atoll rim is in the late afternoon. Going south is pretty easy at any time of the day. We laid a 'snail trail' with our GPS and chartplotter, and used that to navigate back in less-than-perfect light. The depth is normally about 45', with coral heads usually visible very close to the surface.

You can anchor pretty much anywhere along the back side of the reef. Though in heavier winds, anchoring behind the bigger atolls affords better wind protection.

There was a pearl farm at approximately 16°05.65S / 142°22.59W, so watch for buoys. Some visible buoys and others submerged. We picked a safe passage through the buoys (close to the reef), they did not come out to guide us through. Though on a second time through the area, we spotted some submerged pearl buoy strings that we hadn't noticed before—no buoys marking them at all, and barely visible under the water (maybe at a depth that wouldn't have bothered us). – Soggy Paws

## **4.6 Motutunga (Difficult Pass)**

**Guidebooks:**

- South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 25
- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; page 94

This atoll is about 20 miles ESE of Tahanea.

### **4.6.1 Pass**

**August 2020:** This atoll is generally uninhabited, except when it is used for coprah (but coconuts seem in poor shape) or young pearl oysters growing. The lagoon seems impossible to enter for most yachts, only a nearly blind NW pass can be used (similar to, but smaller, than Anse Amyot in Toau). The entrance of the pass is narrow, about 25 or 30 m usable width at the "gate", with a minimum depth at the sounder of 5.5m. Further in, at jetty level (port side moving in), usable width of the pass is 45m and the depth in the center about 15m.

We had 3kt of outside going current at the gate, less than 1kt at jetty level. During our 3 day stay, the current remained outgoing, despite the fact that trades were not strong. We suspect the current is always outgoing.

The jetty is 15 m long and parallel to the pass. It is partially collapsed at the most inward part. Close to the quay, there is about 1.8m depth, and under the center of the boat, at rudder level, about 3m. The 2 existing bollards are not very strong, and location of the few trees in the vicinity makes them not at all ideal to be used for tying. In case of strong weather, an additional anchor further out upfront in the

shallows may be a possibility. We tied a rope across the pass in order, with the help of the continuous pressure of the current on it, to keep the boat away from the jetty.

There is little current at jetty level, but it increases further in the middle, so I am not sure a second boat adjacent to the one at the jetty is possible. Anchoring in the middle in 15m hard sand and rock is possible, but if the anchor gets trapped in one of the side corrals, getting it out in the current will not be easy.

Getting in with an engine is not difficult because the current is against the boat, but going out in strong weather and current may be a different story: One has to make sure to be able to turn around to target the "gate". The number of sunk abandoned ropes on both sides of the pass suggests some boats have had issues. Going out is better between 9 am and 1 pm for sun consideration.

Moving into the lagoon against the strong current in the pass that is getting narrower beyond the jetty may be doable for a very small yacht with a strong engine, but then getting out would be a hazard.

The other pass 2 miles N is even narrower and does not have a jetty. Interestingly sharks in this pass seem more territorial than in the main pass...

**May 2016: 17°02.84S 144 22.29W.** This pass is really shallow and not suitable for a yacht. The pass marked as "Passe Nord Ouest" on my Cmap Charts (a little off set) at around 17°03.68S 144 24.30W.... is not a real passe!!

Having no guide, I explored. It is a deep channel (5 meters at the entrance, around 15 inside) 0.5-mile-long and 45 meters large that become so shallow not to allow the entrance of a yacht in the lagoon. – Hildegard Hansen



The current can be fierce but on the East side of the passe, there is a little coral wharf (10-meter-long) with good depth around (4-7-meter right near wharf) where it is possible to tie up (island style concrete bollards). Some tires are already attached as fenders!

Near the wharf the current loses its intensity and gets almost slack, at times a slow counter current is created. To keep the boat away from the dock there is a coral head on the west reef that looks like is made exactly to put a long line on it.

I came in late in the afternoon with a strong outside current ... going out at almost slack high tide was much easier! Maybe it was not necessary (having somebody on board to help with the lines) but to keep my bow in the current I had to drop an anchor in the pass and I then tied some lines to the dock. To keep the boat away from the dock there is a coral head on the west reef that looks like is made exactly to put a long line on it.

## 4.6.2 Yachtsmen Services

### 4.6.2.1 Water

**Aug. 2020:** There are 2 cisterns, one on each motu across the pass, but when we were there, only the one on the jetty side had water. Not adequate for drinking (unless boiled ?), but ok for laundry.

### 4.6.3 Cruiser Reports

**May 2016:** Ashore plywood houses are probably used when copra is collected. Dinner can be easily caught on the pass (mind current and sharks) and grilled ashore. There are plenty Caveo (coconut crabs?) for lunch on the nearby west motu. To collect some nice coconuts is better to go on the motu all the way on the west of the atoll. There is some exploring to do, pretty snorkeling and edible shells. – Hildegard Hansen

## 4.7 Hiti and Tuanake (No Pass)

### Guide books:

- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; page 96

## 4.8 Katiu (Pass, Small Village)

### Guide books:

- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 92-93
- South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 25

### 4.8.1 Pass

**Katiu has one pass called Passe Pakata.**



**March 2021:** Pass Pakata. Being docked at the jetty halfway the pass for a few days, we saw there is almost always an outgoing current. With normal weather (10-15 knots of easterlies) we found that slack

is only around two hours before high water till high water. We used the tidal table from the questimator for high & low water.

We divided the pass in two parts. The first part is from outside the atoll to the jetty halfway the pass. The second part is from the jetty into the lagoon.

At the entrance of the first part of the pass two red beacons mark the reef on the eastern site. The pass can be entered using the leading lines. The lights on the leading lines were not working during our stay at Katiu. The jetty in the pass has the big fenders for the supply ship, but we were able to dock there very well. At the dock there was less current then in the rest of the pass. It is probably not possible to use the dock when the supply ship, Cobia, is docked there.

Being already at the dock you can see when the current is slack enough to enter the second part of the pass. We entered the lagoon about one till one and a half hour before high water and with good light. The second part is extremely small and surrounded by coral which (almost) reach to the surface. We used SAS-planet with Navionics & satellite images and had one person on the bowsprit watching for bommies and shallows. The three white beacons are on the reef but give a good direction of the route. – Eastern Stream

#### **4.8.2 Anchorages and Mooring**

**March 2021:** 16°26,43S / 144°16,64W. Besides some bommies you have to pay attention to the pearl farms that are in the lagoon. We anchored at 16°26,43W 144°16,64S behind a finger and with a lovely view on the motu and the atoll. The dept was about ten meters and the bottom sand with coral. So please float your chain to protect the coral. It was nice to explore the motu and do some dinghy tours. – Eastern Stream

**May 2009:** Friends on another boat had told us about the little-visited atoll of Katiu. The pass was a bit tricky but we were able to ask a local fisherman for directions and squeezed through with just a few meters on either side. (they have a beam of 25' on their trimaran). - Migration



### **4.8.3 Cruiser Reports**

**March 2021:** The village is compact and small. We saw one little shop with minimal supplies. Besides that, there is a post office and an airstrip with an airplane once a week. Two freight boats supply the island. – Eastern Stream

**May 2009:** We spent a week exploring and snorkeling near the village. I gave a presentation to 30 kids at the elementary school; Alene did a fantastic job translating into French. Getting lost one day (hard to do on an atoll that is only a few hundred meters wide), we met Calixte and Tania, and their cadre of 7 dogs. Calixte is Tahitian and Tania is Greek-Russian. They moved to Katiu many years ago to start a pearl farm. We shared several meals together including a delicious lobster and champagne brunch.

Like most pearl farmers, Calixte is crazy about it and loves explaining the entire process. We had a fantastic time scuba diving in the middle of the atoll with Calixte, helping him with his oyster lines.

(I have edited a lot out of here from their log, called Migrations 11, it would be worth reading, but it's too long for this document)

We walked the reef beachcombing, learned how to use our spear gun, barbequed shrimp and roasted marshmallows on a fire on the beach, gathered coconuts, swam every day, did yoga at sunset, lay on deck watching the Southern Cross and searching for satellites. Life was good. The east end of Katiu was, and remains, our favorite spot in the Tuamotus. - Migration

**Other notes:** The supply ship comes every 2 weeks - There is a post office - The village is about 250 people

### **4.9 Tahanea (Pass)**

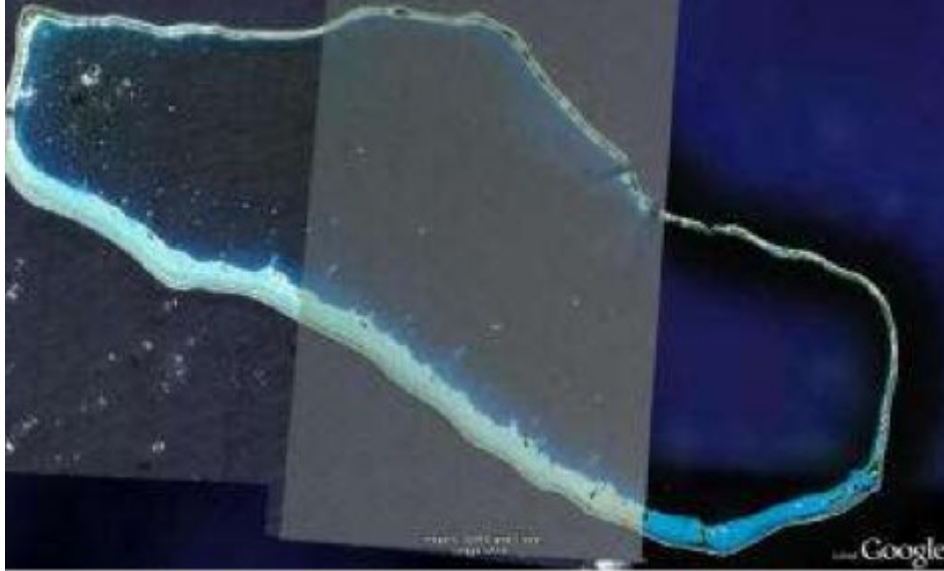
#### **Guidebooks:**

- South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 26
- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 94-95

Tahanea is a national park, and it is mostly uninhabited. There are some buildings near the east pass, and a big plastic cistern, but they are only occupied when locals from Faaite come to harvest copra. The atoll has been designated a park because of the rare Tuamotu Sandpiper, which nests on the motus.

There is sometimes an "island guardian" in residence who will most likely stop by and ask you to sign his log book. He is very friendly and personable, although he does not speak English.





### **Be Kind to the Nesting Birds**

**2019:** We have spent the last 5 years in French Polynesia, a great part of that time in the Tuamotus. One of our favourite places is Tahanea, in particular the SW-side where a handful of natural motus (i.e. not just copra plantations) provide a refuge for birds. Sadly, there are not many of such places left in the Tuamotus, almost all atolls were cleared and turned into plantations at some point.

We visited Tahanea many times over the years and noticed a decline in the number of birds nesting there.

We witnessed several worrying things that endanger those nesting grounds, particularly the ground-breeding birds such as brown and masked boobies are shied away easily. Many locals are not environmentally aware and don't think about sustainability, but we can't do anything about that. Unfortunately, many cruisers are also inconsiderate as we have seen too many times. They drop their anchors in coral, go kitesurfing on beaches with nesting birds, have bonfires there, take their dogs ashore and hunt coconut crabs at night.

To be honest, each visitor to those motus disturbs the birds, even people who are careful and aware. The 'Number 7' reef mentioned in the compendium is one of these bird motus that has become very popular with cruisers in the last years, and now the birds are not safe there either.

Please ask everyone visiting to consider the birds in this very fragile ecosystem. – Pitufa

#### **4.9.1 Passes**

Tahanea has three passes:

- **Passé Teavatapu** – Center Pass (easiest pass to enter and exit)
- **Passé Motupuapua** – Northern Passé (also navigable)
- **Passé D'Otao** – Southern Passé

**May 2021:** Entering the Passé Teavatapu was straight forward. This is a wide pass with no surprises. We entered 30 minutes before the predicted “slack tide” and saw about 1-1.5 kts of outgoing current. It is easy to see the entire pass from the outside if you position yourself in the center. We entered closer to the port side as there was water percolating toward the starboard side. At dawn, the path was clear.

We departed out of the north pass with zero current and no issues. Several boats preferred this pass over the middle/center pass as they determined it had less current and waves. – Sugar Shack.

**June 2020:** After a blustery passage from Hao, we arrived at Passe Tevavatapu at 0400, high and slack tide. Unfortunately, it was pitch black and not navigable. We waited for a few hours for the sun to come up and entered the pass at 0630 with 3kts of outgoing current. Lucky for us we have two strong engines and the wind in our favor. With the jib up, we hugged the left side of the channel and entered with no issues. – Sugar Shack

**Sept. 2019:** We entered the center pass “Teavatapu” which is deep and wide. It was a fairly easy pass to navigate. Our first stop was the anchorage between the center and west pass. We did not have very much weather which was an added bonus. SE winds at about 8-9kts and less than .5-meter waves. Ideal time to enter the pass. When we arrived, there were 3 boats. – Sugar Shack

**Oct. 2018:** We entered Tahanea at the middle pass, against a 2 kt ebb. Not difficult. – Kokopeli

**Oct. 2010:** Going in the Pass coordinates – Soggy Paws

- TAHAAPPR S16°50.1375' / W144°39.2266'
- TAHAPASS S16°50.9968' / W144°41.0125'
- TAHA IN S16°51.5110' / W144°41.1084'

#### **4.9.2 Anchorages and Moorings**

**Please float your chain!** Protect the coral and prevent future damage to marine life!

And save yourself the hassle of having to unwrap your chain. Simply use fenders or old pearl farm floats (See “Anchoring Around Coral”).

##### **4.9.2.1 Pass Anchorages**

**March 2022: 16°50.594S / 144°41.776W.** We anchored in 3m of water in a nice little sandy patch. We added 4 floats to get our scope and clear the bommies. – Sugar Shack

**May 2021: 16°50.928S / 144°41.546W** dropped in 5.5 meters of water amongst a sea of coral heads. We put the first float on at 12m, 2<sup>nd</sup> at 19m, 3<sup>rd</sup> at 25m and the bridle at 35m. Super good holding. Hung out here during Northerlies and had a comfortable stay.

**July 2020: 16°50.93S / 144°41.51W,** dropped in 4 meters of water surrounded by bommies. We floated our chain and had great holding in a nice sandy patch. Most boats anchor between the North and middle pass because it is protected and shallow. However, this area is covered in bommies so you must float your chain to avoid getting wrapped around a coral head. – Sugar Shack

**Sept. 2019:** Near middle pass (between middle and west passes) we found a fairly sandy spot amongst the bommies. We dropped in about 11 meters of water. – Sugar Shack

**Oct. 2018:** After entering the pass, we turned to starboard and anchored SW of the motu between the middle and west passes. A good anchorage, secure in these conditions. – Kokopeli

**May 2010: S16°51.7245' W144°39.8052'** Near E Pass, Moderate depth, some coral.

**16°51.715S / 144°39.84W.** Another decent anchorage is possible near the eastern pass, Pass D’Otao, and navigation is easy between the other common anchorage just west of the middle pass. Anchor along a narrow shelf in 35-50’ sand with low scattered coral heads.

From this anchorage, you can easily dinghy to the ‘town’ which has a cistern (big black plastic container next to a building). From here you can also see the incoming current stream on the eastern pass. Good spot to stage for a dive of the eastern pass. – Soggy Paws

#### **4.9.2.2 SE Corner Anchorage**

The SE Corner Anchorage offers protection from ENE to SSW winds. Nico harvests copra here several months a year. He loves company and is very willing to trade fish/lobster. Be respectful of his personal habitat and copra fields.

**June 2022:** Winds were shifting SSE at about 20kts, so while Teavapatu pass was safe near slack tide, it was unpleasant. We bashed across the atoll to the SE corner, where protection was excellent and there were tons of sandy options in about 10', no floats needed. Snorkeling near the cuts between motus was pretty good; diversity of small fish and the occasional blacktip reef shark. Paddleboarding was even better. Another boat was kite-surfing pretty much all day. – Villa Veritas

**May 2021: 16°57.213S / 144°34.7980W.** dropped in 3 meters of clear blue water. Solid holding. There were no coral heads within a 360° radius so we skipped the floats. This is very close to the copra house so we try to avoid this anchorage when the locals are working the copra. – Sugar Shack

**June 2020: 16°57.435S / 144°35.014W** dropped in 6 meters of sand with 6 floats to avoid tangling with the neighboring bommies. We anchored here to be protected from a maramu bringing strong SE winds and were very comfortable in the turquoise, calm waters.

**16°57.23S / 144°34.81W** dropped in 3.2 meters of beautiful, solid holding sand on our 2<sup>nd</sup> visit. There were no bommies around so we skipped the floats and enjoyed a nice, easy, solid, hook.

**16°57.751S / 144°35.20W** in 5 meters of sandy water. There are not nearly as many bommies in this area and it is right in front of the prettiest sandy beach in the atoll. – Sugar Shack

**May 2010: S16°57.22' W144°34.81'** 14' sand, few heads, Good prot ENE to SSW. We have anchored in about 6 places and traversed twice the NE and E sectors of the atoll (see on “other section”). The anchorage that we found as a refuge from the strong SE winds (in the SE corner of the atoll) has been the best so far. It is 9 miles SE of the main pass. We have a nice anchorage in 15' of water in good sand, with protection from ENE to SSW. There is a nice palm-studded motu protecting us from the wind and chop. The motu is home to nesting birds, please, do not disturb these birds!

Direct Route from this anchorage back to Middle Pass:

- TH RT#1 S16°56.6190' W144°35.5768' ARE isolated heads on this route, but easily
- TH RT#2 S16°56.1030' W144°36.4693' spied with a good deck watch
- TH RT#3 S16°54.4900' W144°38.0397' Depths 75-100 feet, with heads at 2'
- TH RT#4 S16°53.5460' W144°38.7766'
- TH RT#5 S16°51.8160' W144°41.0232'

Though you can go direct, the easiest navigation between the pass and the SE anchorage is to stay close around the rim. Stay in ~60. There are occasional isolated coral heads, easily seen and avoided from the deck on a reasonable day, but we recommend a stop to snorkel. See TAHA6 under “activities” for the best snorkeling INSIDE the lagoon. There is a pinnacle that comes up from about 40' with tons of pretty fish and sea life at about 5' deep, easy dinghy (swim) distance from Taha6. – Soggy Paws

**May 2010: 16°57.2' S / 144°44.8' W.** 12 feet, sand, and no coral within wrapping range. I found no anchorages as nice as the Soggy Paws anchorage. There are a number of narrow 10-foot-deep sand banks further South and West, including: 16°59.04 S / 144.39.37 W. One could anchor on the edge and have swinging room, although swinging out away from the reef into the deeper water risks wrapping a coral head. A Bahamian moor would work nicely here, with the two anchors running along the bank in the clear sand. This way one could not swing in too close to the reef/shallows, or out into the coral

heads. The location given is on the SW corner of a group of three particularly attractive motus, so might be worth the effort.

Shallow draft boats such as catamarans would love some of these spots. The water is so clear when it is calm that it looks almost too shallow for any boat, but I crossed several right at 10 feet with my depth finder beeping steadily at me (12' alarm setting).

There are endless anchoring possibilities in this corner of the atoll at 35 feet with sand and coral heads should anyone want to anchor in them. That is a bit deep for me to free dive and unwrap chain from coral so I will pass. My dinghy can take me to these motus from the Soggy Paws anchorage.

**16°57.05N and 144°44.36W.** This spot mentioned by Soggy Paws and indeed could be a good place to ride out a "sheer-line" or "trough" weather event. The reef is somewhat represented by the reef contours on C-maps. One can anchor on either side of the reef, which trends NNW, and has a definite East-going hook at the outer end, and a less-defined one to the West. The one to the East creates a nice, semi-circular anchorage in 20-30 feet with numerous bommies, although most are below the depth of my vessel. One would have some protection from the North here, but not much. Anything West of due North, all the way around to South would have excellent protection. South East it starts getting dicey again, and East to North is exposed. Obviously, the further into the little pocket one is willing to go, the better protection from the North. – Fellow Traveler

#### **4.9.2.3 "7" Anchorage**

**May 2021: 16°57.121S / 144°44.466W.** Dropped in 1.5 meters of sandy water, way up within the "7" in good holding. No need for floats as the bommies were well clear of us. We did drop a 2<sup>nd</sup> anchor to prevent us from swinging into shallower areas during low tide.

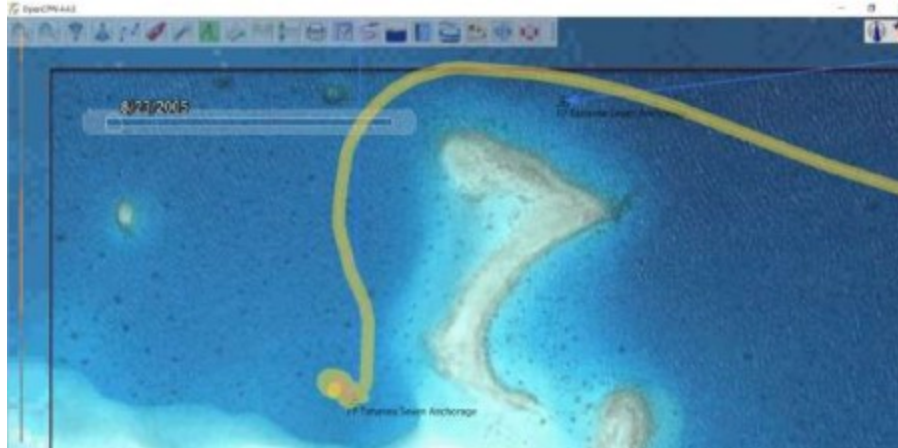
**16°57.121S / 144°44.483W.** Dropped in 2.2 meters of sandy water with 2 floats to keep the chain off the surrounding coral heads. – Sugar Shack

**Sept. 2019: 16°57.332S / 144°44.172W.** Found a shallow spot (2.8 meters) sandy bottom that was a roly and bouncy anchorage as it was unprotected. Known as the "7" anchorage because the Google Earth image is a "7." The atoll near the "7" anchorage is a bird refuge so please be careful while walking around. Avoid areas near nests and baby birds and be as respectful to the bird families as possible. – Sugar Shack

**2019: 16°57.1146S / 144 44.5333W.** 30' sand with some bommies. We floated the chain. I would like to point out that the GE image gives the impression that the reef shown is above the surface and provides good wave protection. In fact, most of the reef does not come above the surface and allows some waves to come right over providing little break. I do not think this would provide much protection in a strong wind event. We have heard others who spent a bouncy night here before moving on.

Warning: Just be aware if anchoring here and planning on heading back to the pass you will most likely have poor light. Best to go here from the pass and then to the SE corner and then back to the pass. – Jacaranda

**2016:** The anchorage that Soggy Paws mentions that they didn't check out, we did. We call this the 7 anchorage because from GE it looks like a perfect number 7. We anchored at the 7 anchorage and spent a peaceful night. The trades were E and not very windy but have talked to a couple of friends who spent a few nights here on both sides with good success. Some of the reef dries out at low tide. Both sides provide good access to the closest motu which has good birding. – Jacaranda



#### 4.9.2.4 North Edge Anchorage

**May 2021: 16°46.6874S / 144°48.3259W.** Anchored in 5 meters of sand with many large, deep bommies. We added 4 floats and safely enjoyed the anchorage in SE and NW winds. – Sugar Shack

#### 4.9.2.5 Northeast Anchorage

**Oct. 2017: 16°54.04 S / 144°39.37 W.** We anchored in 3 meters and a used couple of anchor floats for the tiniest of bommies.

**16°53.12S / 144°34.93W** We also visited the NE corner of the atoll... Anchored. – Mary Anne II

Correction to GPS position for anchorage on sandy shelf. "Fellow Traveler" mentions "There are a number of narrow 10 foot deep sand banks further South and West, including: 16°54.04 S / 144°39.37 W." - that position should be corrected to 1659.04' S (i.e. just a typo that 54 in the S position should be a 59) – Mary Anne II

#### May 2010: Other Anchorages: Soggy Paws

- TAHA2 S16°54.8479' W144°34.4900' E side of atoll, nice snorkeling
- TAHA3 S16°50.6107' W144°41.8510' Lots coral, some NW protection
- TAHA4 S16°51.0551' W144°41.5240' 25-30' Lots coral, good snorkeling, nr main pass

### 4.9.3 Activities

#### 4.9.3.1 Diving and Snorkeling

**June 2022:** We thought TAHA6 was not worth the stop; there were some bigger fish, but the coral is mostly dead. Definitely need to float your chain there.

We dove and drift-snorkeled the north pass. Both times we found that the current picked up very quickly after slack tide. – Villa Veritas

**July 2020:** The north pass never disappoints! We saw several manta rays gobbling up the plankton and gliding up and down the pass. There are typically lots of fish and pretty coral on the north side of the north pass. We've also seen hammerhead sharks and marlin in the north pass! Truly spectacular. Periodically you can find manta rays in the south pass too, but they tend to be more in the north pass. The middle pass is teeming with fish and always provides a fun snorkel or dive as well. – Sugar Shack

**Sept. 2019:** We really enjoyed snorkeling the passes here. This uninhabited island is a true gem. The waters are absolutely spectacularly clear turquoise brimming with lots of sea life. We had tons of fish and sharks by our boat and around the reefs.

**Motupuapua pass (North).** We snorkeled here the several times and enjoyed each time immensely. We found manta rays in this pass during both incoming and outgoing tides. We waited until about 45 minutes past slack tide and went out. During an incoming tide, we found the mantas on the south east side of the pass. Be patient and look for them from your dinghy. They make large loops within the pass. During an outgoing tide we found them on the north east side of the pass. The best snorkeling was on the west side of the pass. We took our dinghy out right after slack tide on the incoming tide and did a slow and wonderful drift near the reef. It was teeming with a large variety of fish, large groupers and napoleons and sharks.

**Teavatapu pass (middle):** We snorkeled the west side of the pass and found lots of little fish around the coral. A few curious sharks followed us around a bit, but just being curious.

**“7” Anchorage** has snorkeling between the two motus just east of the anchorage. – Sugar Shack

**Oct. 2018:** We snorkel drift-dived all three passes. The most fun was probably the NW pass. We timed it to be out there just before the morning high slack. As this occurred, we saw many manta rays converging on the pass, on or just below the surface. We jumped in, and were able to swim with them as the fed on the incoming plankton. Visibility dropped noticeably with the plankton, but was still good. Also, good coral, particularly on the west side. The east pass was also fun, it's divided on the inside by a reef. The west channel was shallow and narrow, but easy for snorkel. Lots of interesting fish in all three, and good coral.

We saw, and were seen by, sharks every time we were in the water, in Fakarava and in Tahanea. Generally, they were black-tips and black-tip reef, to a maximum size of 4 ft. They didn't seem aggressive, although one circled me. I wish I knew more about shark behavior as it relates to divers, what would be warning signs. I've been told that banking turns around you, and spinning, vertical passes are a very bad sign. Maybe DAN has more information on this. – Kokopeli

**Oct. 2017:** We found a lovely active shallow coral shelf that is easily snorkeled (in waist deep water) running along the LEFT/North half of the Motu - facing into the Atoll - and lots of sea cucumbers in the (false) “pass” to the Left/North. – Mary Anne II

**Oct. 2010:** We did drift dives in the passes, and had planned to do a couple of more before the bad weather set in. There are 3 passes side-by-side in Tahanea, so a lot of varied terrain to explore. On the outside of the pass, we saw sharks, dolphins, and big pelagic fish. In the pass... tons and tons of live coral of every variety and all the pretty reef fish you can imagine... We have yet to take a camera on a drift dive yet... still getting used to the procedure.

**2010:** Day snorkel spots – Soggy Paws

- TAHA6 S16°52.1230' W144°37.8250' Day anch., good snorkeling, 25' some heads
- T16 S16°54.4110' W144°34.4916' NICE HEADS
- T17 S16°52.5911' W144°36.0481' SNORKELING

#### **4.9.3.2 Hiking**

**Sept. 2019:** Walking around at the “7” anchorage on the water line being very diligent while observing all of the birds. The two motus just east of the anchorage have pink sandy and loads of birds. Be very careful walking around as the sand piper birds nest in the sand, the boobies nest on the ground and trees. Truly magical experience to see all of the white fuzzy babies all around. – Sugar Shack

**Oct. 2017:** On a calm day we went ashore and hiked across the motu to the exposed coast. There are small ponds inland, and the easiest path from one side to the other is marked with cairns and propped up plastic flotsam. The land itself is mostly old/broken large bits of broken/jagged coral so you need good shoes (or very, very, very tough feet). – Mary Anne II

#### **4.9.4 Cruiser Reports**

**May 2021:** In the SE anchorage keep an eye out for Nico. He comes to Tahanea to harvest the copra several months a year. He is originally from Faaite and speaks French. He is super friendly and loves company but please be respectful of his house and personal space (don't go wondering around without his permission). He loves to trade his catch of the day or lobster for batteries, old sails, pots/pans, etc... -- Sugar Shack

**Sept. 2019:** The caretaker came to visit our boat and requested some very basic information. We filled out his book and he left after a very friendly exchange. – Sugar Shack

**Oct. 2018:** A good anchorage, secure in these conditions. There seemed to be one person living ashore in a semi-permanent setup, with a boat. We didn't contact him, but we were visited by another individual in a different boat. He had some English, and explained that he was a caretaker/watchman for the island. He asked us to sign into a guest log he had, and indicate when we had arrived and when we would be leaving. No fees were assessed. He was quite pleasant. – Kokpeli

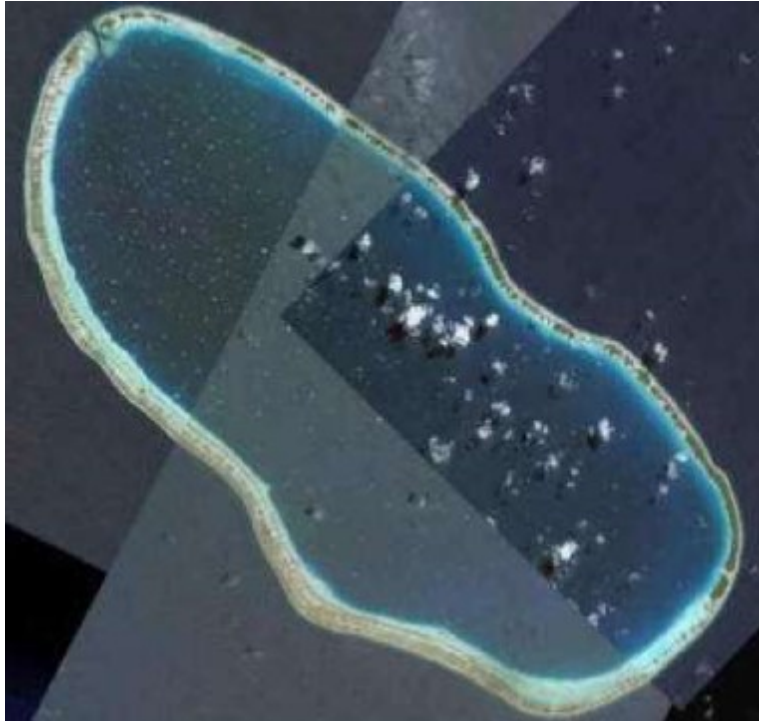
**Oct. 2017:** The camp on the island was occupied by a brother and sister - harvesting copra over a 3-month annual stay at Atoll. A nice easy paddle/snorkel on overhanging coral shelf along the beach/shore line (1m depth). On a calm day we went ashore and hiked across the motu to the exposed coast. There are small ponds inland, and the easiest path from one side to the other is marked with cairns and propped up plastic flotsam. The land itself is mostly old/broken large bits of broken/jagged coral so you need good shoes (or very, very, very tough feet). – Mary Anne II

**June 2011:** The snorkeling was good, there is a small landing beach nearby and the motu stretches for miles and is great for walking on both sides. (near anchorage 016°53.725 S / 144 34.596 W). As for other birds there are many nesting and inhabiting all the eastern motus we visited including the atoll fruit dove. – Narama

#### **4.10 Faaite (Pass)**

##### **Guide books:**

- South Pacific Anchorages: Warwick Clay, 2nd ed; page 26
- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 86-87



#### **4.10.1 Pass**

**Faaita has one pass called Passe Teporioha.**

**May 2021:** We entered the pass during 5-8 knot north winds with approximately 2 knots of outgoing current. The pass had flat water and navionics charts appeared accurate. We saw 4 meters of depth at the shallowest point on our track (suitable for our 60-foot monohull sailboat with 2.1 m draft).

We snorkeled the pass prior to entry to confirm suitable depth and to look for any obstructions. During our time in Faaita (4 days during settled light north, northwest winds) we observed the pass only to be outgoing, fluctuating between approximately 1/2 a knot and 4 knots. Inside the pass we navigated to an anchor location 1/2 mile south west of the village at 16°42.64 South, 145 21.02 West. We noticed a number of bommies (some close to the surface) on route to and nearby this location— Slingshot

#### **4.10.2 Anchorages and Moorings**

**Please float your chain.**

Protect the coral and prevent future damage to marine life!

And save yourself the hassle of having to unwrap your chain. Simply use a fender or old pearl farm float.

**2008:** The outside anchorage can be uncomfortable with S. swell or with occasional W. wind and you anchor on a hard-coral shelf. Inside anchorage is not protected from East sector winds and is about 1/2 mile away from the village. The lagoon is difficult to navigate because of the numerous pearl farm stations! – Sloepmouche

#### **4.10.3 General Yacht Services**

**Post Office:** The main village has a post office. Hours: Mon-Fri. – Slingshot

#### **4.10.4 Provisions**

**May 2021:** The main village has three small magasins and a boulangerie (bakery). – Slingshot



#### **4.10.5 Activities**

##### **4.10.5.1 Diving and Snorkeling**

Pass makes an interesting drift-snorkel on an in-going current especially past the town pier and the fish traps they call \*Parc à poissons\*. – Sloepmouche

##### **4.10.6 Cruiser Reports**

**2008:** There is a dinghy pass thru the reef that brings you close to the village in protected water. If you come from the anchorage inside, come back as if you are exiting the pass and just before you reach the town pier, you'll see the sticks marking the channel on your left. – Sloepmouche

#### **4.11 Raraka (Pass)**

##### **Guidebooks:**

- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 88-89 South Pacific Anchorages: Warwick Clay, 2nd ed; page 26
- Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia: 2001, pg 71-72

The atoll of Raraka is located 10 miles SE of Kauehi.

##### **4.11.1 Pass**

**Raraka has one pass called Passe Manureva.**

**2010:** Pass is narrow & shallow with permanent out flow of 3 knots or more at HW. We got to less than 1m under the keel (7' keel) in both arms of the pass before abandoning the attempt. There are leading lines & beacons in the lagoon but the village would not have much shelter except in NE to N winds.

We found the beacons here to be very confusing which was the main reason we abandoned the attempt to enter the lagoon, and the lagoon itself also appeared very shallow. – White Princess

#### **4.12 Kauehi (Pass, Airport, Supplies)**

##### **Guide Books:**

- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 88-89 South Pacific Anchorages: Warwick Clay, 2nd ed; page 26
- Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia, 2001, pg 69

##### **4.12.1 Pass**

**Kauehi has one pass called Passe Arikitamiro (near motu Toauau).**

**Nov. 2018:** The pass was well marked/ accurately charted and straightforward/easy to negotiate, we were in daylight both ways, but I would have no concerns about leaving in the dark. The Guesstimator worked well for entry/exit and on ebb tides for both passages, we found that the overfalls were much less to the east of the pass' centreline. – Moon Rebel

**May 2016:** We arrived in the late morning slack tide. The tide was still a strong 4 knots, and the turbulence of the pass was visible, but the pass was wide and clear. We had no trouble coming through on one engine. – Starry Horizons

**June 2011:** We approached Kauehi after three days of no wind or very light winds in the Tuamotus. We could see a few standing waves when viewing the Arikitamiro pass from a distance. However, soon thereafter we entered the Arikitamiro Pass 80 minutes AFTER the slack tide was estimated by the "Current Guestimator" and the waters were dead flat and our motoring speed didn't vary at all. Perfect timing, a first for us. – Yolo

**2010:** Pass is wide & deep with >12m. Inflow on flood tide can cause small overfalls inside the lagoon. Overfalls are slight on outgoing tide, but watch for whirlpools forming. – White Princess

#### **4.12.2 Anchorages and Moorings**

**USE EXTREME CARE** when using the moorings in Kauehi. The moorings were put in a few years ago by the environment service and no service has been done since. These moorings are now about 3+ years old and with no maintenance it's like playing Russian Roulette.

**NEVER ever assume that a mooring is good without inspecting it.  
Boats are wrecked every year while crossing the Pacific due to trusting a mooring.**

**Please float your chain!** Protect the coral and prevent future damage to marine life!  
And save yourself the hassle of having to unwrap your chain. Simply use fenders or old pearl farm floats.

**Nov 2023:** There is a mooring about a half mile to the SE just after entering the pass. This mooring belongs to the Aquatiki dive charter boat. If they are not there, you can probably pick it up but you'll get kicked off if they show up.

There is also a mooring outside the pass about .16 miles to the SE. This is convenient for mooring your dinghy when diving or snorkeling the reef.

There is a continuous motu on the E side of Kauehi with a road on it. This means that you can anchor in the SE corner and walk or bicycle all the way to the village (about 8 km). It is rough in spots but it makes a good adventure. Especially because you can have an ice cream when you get there! - Migration

**April 2019:** We recently spent a few weeks anchored off the village in Kauehi and wanted to pass on some updates to what others have written. We anchored off the village in about 28-30' finding a sandy spot without any bommies around. There are 6-7 moorings located in the middle anchorage that Yolo anchored in years ago. We confirmed from a number of locals that no one has maintained these moorings since they were installed. All are set in about the 20-25' range. I would suggest that if you want to use these moorings to dive/inspect them first. They appear to be in decent condition. See our previous warning about moorings.

**NW Anchorage: 15°46.816 S / 145 08.628 W.** When the weather was forecast to going around the clock, we spoke with a number of the locals (including Hieti- a retired FP cargo ship captain) and they all said to anchor by the airport near the Pension. This anchorage offers protection from 235-080 degrees. We ended up staying at the village because the wind never went above 12knots. – Jacaranda

**Nov. 2018:** Kauehi, particularly just to the N/NE of Tearavero village looked to be a good place to tuck-up if there was some heavy weather coming through. – Moon Rebel

**May 2016: 15°56.270 S / 145°03.364 W.** First, we headed up the channel towards the village, but on VHF we chatted with some friends and decided to head south instead of anchoring near the village. We made our way down through the coral heads. We anchored in 30 feet of water. There were a few coral heads around, with some of their tops reaching up to 10 feet deep. We only had one small coral head in our swing zone for the chain. We snorkeled this area. Visibility was good.

**15°57.514 S / 145°04.754 W.** The next morning, we moved to the "official" Southern Anchorage. Just to the west of our position were two large flat-top coral heads. Starry Horizons was anchored on a sand bank, 10 feet deep. We had no coral heads around us, and the water was crystal clear. To the east of us, our friends in a monohull anchored in 30 feet of water. There is clear color demarcation between the 10-foot bank and the 30-foot surrounding areas. This is the idyllic anchorage. The water was beautifully clear. The beach was easy access and we walked the circumference of the motu and collected shells. The point of the motu has a small shack and concrete table. – Starry Horizons

**June 2011: 15°56.206S / 145°03.328W.** The extreme eastern part of the lagoon. This area has very few coral heads and offers great protection from wind and waves from the N, NE, E, SE, S and SW.

**15°49.263S / 145°07.041W.** Another anchorage in 22' of water, sand bottom with a few coral heads. – Yolo

**June 2010: 15°51.776S / 145°15.317W.** Our anchor spot. – Australia 31

### **4.12.3 Yachtsmen Services**

#### **4.12.3.1 Cooking Gas (Propane / Butane)**

**April 2019:** Cooking Gas: Magasin Yip - Also has a nice tree next door that we used to decant the French bottle into our US propane bottle much to the interest of the locals. – Jacaranda

#### **4.12.3.2 Fuel (Diesel / Gasoline)**

**April 2019:** Limited amounts of gasoline can be purchased from Magsin Anna or Magasin Yip. – Jacaranda

#### **4.12.3.3 Trash and Recycling**

**June 2011:** When you walk down the wharf towards the church you will see a large steel trash barrel near the first building (a copra warehouse). According to the village "Policeman" cruisers can drop off their trash. – Yolo

#### **4.12.3.4 Water**

**June 2011:** According to local "policeman" cruisers can use the fresh water at the warehouse location, you will see a large black fresh water container. – Yolo

### **4.12.4 General Services**

#### **4.12.4.1 Gendarmerie**

Location: Face the church and turn left (north). Go several hundred meters, the gendarmerie is on the right.

#### **4.12.4.2 Le Mairie**

**June 2011:** The road in front of the church is concrete for several blocks. If you face the church and turn left (north) and go several hundred meters you will see the village government on your right. – Yolo

#### **4.12.4.3 Post Office**

**June 2011:** If you face the church and turn left (north) and go several hundred meters you will see the village postal service offices on your right. – Yolo

#### **4.12.4.4 Wifi**

**April 2019:** There is Vini tower in the village and we had good cell connection but incredibly slow internet. There is no plan on bringing fiber optic cable here. We were also told that the OPT has Vinispot but they were closed every time we went by there – Jacaranda

#### **4.12.5 Provisions**

**Nov 2023:** Fresh veggies are available at Mamie's. She lives next to Magasin Yip.

A snack is open for lunch just where the road to the quay meets the main road. - Migration

**April 2019:** There are 3 stores now in the village to support 350 people. – Jacaranda

- **Magasin:** The first and the oldest is close to the church/pier.
- **Magasin Anna:** Further down the main street (right of church) @ 100m on right (Eddie & Matilda).
- **Magasin Yip:** Continue down the main street another 50m (Fanny & Anselme).
  - Magasin Yip has frozen baguettes wrapped in plastic wrap that were good. He also has fresh baguettes flown in from Tahiti on Wed mornings. Best to get them by 11am.
- **Veggies:** Almost nothing is available for sale (Potatoes & Onions). Locals raise their own so you might ask if anyone wants to sell lettuce or watermelons.
- **Supply Ships**
  - Manavea Nui - Comes 2x a month on Wed
  - Stella Mavis - 1x a month
  - Cobia - 1x a month

**June 2011:** The posted hours on the store don't mean a thing, it's open when it is open. The store has a few basic items (at least half of the items are junk food), some frozen meats and canned or boxed goods; it never has fruits, and only onions, garlic, and sometimes potatoes are available for fresh veggies. Most items are very expensive, even by French Polynesian standards. The selection didn't appear to change after the arrival of the Friday supply ship. However, on Saturday and Monday the only planes that visit the island arrive. The planes bring fresh baguettes from Tahiti, 130 CFP each. The village does not have a bakery. Try to be at the store about an hour after the plane touches down...baguettes disappear quickly. – Yolo

#### **4.12.6 Activities**

##### **4.12.6.1 Diving and Snorkeling**

**May 2016:** 15°56.270 S / 145°03.364 W. The water was beautifully clear. The beach was easy access and we walked the circumference of the motu and collected shells. The point of the motu has a small shack and concrete table. We had a bon fire one night on the point. – Starry Horizons

##### **4.12.6.2 Points of Interest**

**April 2019:** Recommendations from Jacaranda

**Crafts:** For those who like to see exquisite local hand-made jewelry, ask Fannie to see them at Magasin Yip. Fannie makes really nice necklaces using shells and coconut fiber that she sells in Papeete. Linda was very lucky to have one made for her by Fannie. Even if Fannie does not have any in her store ask to see photos of the ones she has made. We can understand why they sell out almost as fast as they are put on display in Papeete.

**Church:** Services on Sunday are at 8:00

**Pearls:** There are no pearl farms anymore in Kauehi, but a few families are raising baby oysters that they sell to other farms in Fakarava.

Tiaihau +689-58-25-49. has built a half dozen or so tiny "bungalows" for tourists at the pearl farm. They cost about \$35/day to rent; \$70 a day if you want three meals included (clearly a good choice as there are no restaurants on the island!) You can learn about the pearl farming, go diving and just generally laze around.

#### **4.12.7 Cruiser Reports**

**Nov. 2018:** We were only ashore on a Sunday, so perhaps not the best day to judge, but the village at Tearavero was closed, even the church! Very few people around and many houses looked to be derelict/empty; we were told that the island's pearl industry had finished (a water problem) and there seemed little else. There were a couple of small grocery stores though no idea what they stocked. – Moon Rebel

**May 2016:** The water was beautifully clear. The beach was easy access and we walked the circumference of the motu and collected shells. The point of the motu has a small shack and concrete table. We had a bon fire one night on the point. – Starry Horizons

**June 2011:** The weather was quickly changing and the three-day strong blow from the south, southeast, and east was starting to materialize, a mara'amu. We decided to seek shelter in the southeastern corner of the lagoon which was about 7 miles east of the pass. We set a waypoint at the inside of the pass at 15°56.926 S / 145°10.622 W and headed east to waypoint 15°56.18 S / 145°05.86 W. This route had water in the hundred-foot range and we did not observe any reefs to avoid. Next, we traveled southeast to waypoint 15°57.47 S / 145°04.63 W which was highlighted in the Tuamotu Compendium. By this time the wind had really started to pick up and this anchorage, which is behind a reef and between two motus didn't offer ideal protection.

We decided to motor 1.5 miles northeast along the coast using eye-ball navigation and dropped our hook in a perfect location to sit out the high winds. We did not see any hazards along the way. Our anchor touched sand in 22 feet of water just north of Mahuehue at 15°56.206 S / 145°03.328 W, the extreme eastern part of the lagoon. This area has very few coral heads and offers great protection from wind and waves from the N, NE, E, SE, S and SW. There are no goods or services available at this location.

After a few days in the southeastern part of the lagoon we sailed north to Tearavero village. We traveled about 7 miles directly from the SE anchorage noted above to waypoint 15°50.10 S and 145°07.25 W with the sun high in the sky. Our C-Map NT+ navigation software did not chart this area so we had to use eye-ball navigation. Traveling between these two waypoints kept us at least a quarter of a mile away from six reefs, yet mid-way we had to make a slight jog around a large reef. Almost all of the trip was in 70+ feet of water and the reefs are easy to see in good light. We also had to avoid the pearl farm buoys near the village.

You can anchor west of Tearavero village in three locations. The first location (western anchorage) is directly west of the village with a reef to the south and north of it. If you jog around the northern reef

you have access to the second anchorage (middle anchorage) which we used. We anchored in 22 feet of water, sand bottom with a few coral heads, at 15°49.263 S and 145°07.041 W. The middle anchorage also has a reef to the south and north of it. If you jog around the northern reef of the middle anchorage you can move further east and anchor north of the village. All three locations provide you with good protection from the N, NE, E, SE, and S. The southern anchorage is closest to the village, yet when the supply ship visits the village the shuttle barge creates a lot of wake. You can easily motor your dingy from the middle anchorage through the reef to the village. If you are expecting a big blow from the NE, E, SE, or S, pick the northern anchorage if you are going to stay near the village.

The best Tearavero village landmark is the tall church. Just west of the church is a 200-meter-long concrete wharf. You can tie your dingy up at the end of the wharf. On Fridays you will have to pull your dingy onto the sand beach north of the wharf because the supply ship shuttle uses the wharf for most of the day.

During our stay in Tearavero we spoke with numerous locals (in our broken French) and assisted them in planting coconut trees and building a garage. Everyone was warm and welcoming.

After a week of 20+ knot winds from the east, we sailed out of the lagoon and through the pass about three hours AFTER the estimated time for slack tide, according to the "Current Guestimator." The waters were ebbing at about 4-5 knots. We stayed to the east side of the pass in 50+ feet of water and the largest wave we experienced was under a foot tall. However, the western side of the pass had 1 meter high waves, spaced every 2 meters, screaming towards the ocean! – Yolo

#### **4.13 Taiaro (No Pass)**

##### **Guide Books:**

- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 88-89

#### **4.14 Anaa (No Pass)**

##### **Guide Boks:**

- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 90-91

#### **4.15 Fakarava (Pass, Village, Supplies, Fuel, Wifi, ATM)**

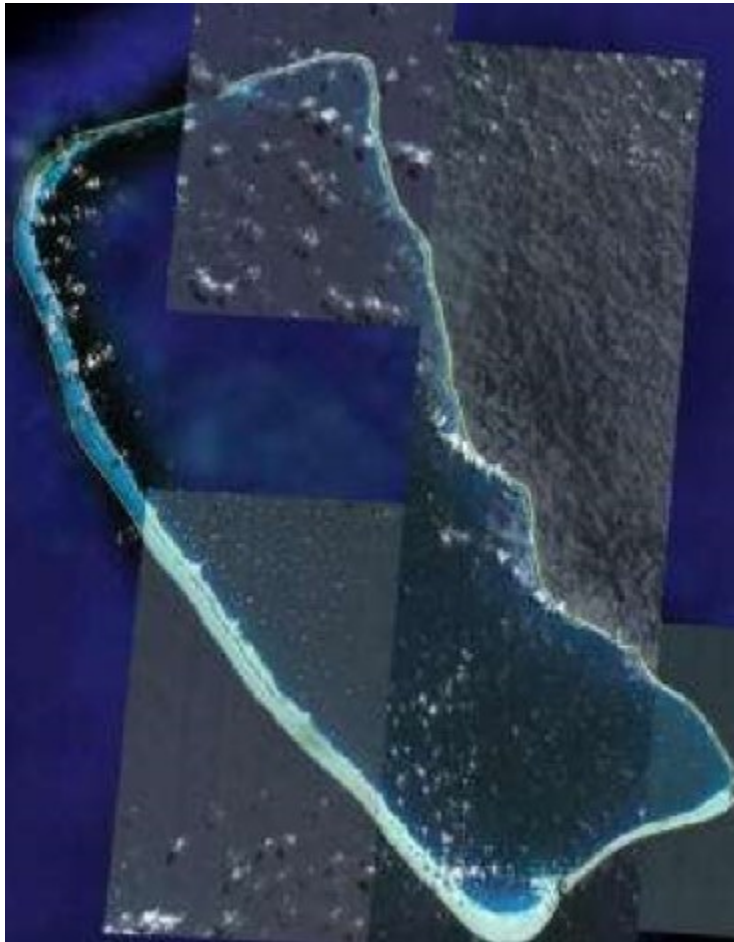
##### **Guide Books:**

- South Pacific Anchorages: Warwick Clay, 2nd ed; page 27
- Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia: 2001, pg 73-79
- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 84-86

##### **Unique to Fakarava:**

- As a UNESCO biosphere reserve, not all of the FAKARAVA atoll is 'open' for navigation, anchoring, fishing, watersports etc. For details, see the pdf on Marine Protected Areas in French Polynesia (now in the Soggy Paws files).
- Any fish/crabs/lobster are ONLY for consumption within the Atoll.
- There is a very small tourist fee to pay (As of June 2017 it was minimal 55CPF per person / per night)

- Local literature says you must report on arrival to Town Hall
  - Practicalities of reporting on arrival make this a little difficult, but if you do make your way to town on a work day - it is only fair to go in and pay the dues. Against reported expectation, but It appears acceptable to make this visit when convenient and not make it your first anchorage (there are no obvious checks on who has paid - at least this is what we did)
  - The tax is neither communicated nor enforced, unless you show up at the mairie in Rotoava.



#### **4.15.1 Passes**

**There are two passes in Fakarava.**

- The North pass, Passe Garuae, is near the town of Rotoava, which has typical small-town services.
- The South pass, Passe Tumakohua, is about 30 miles south, and has almost no services, but great diving. There are several anchorage places between the two main anchoring locations.

#### **4.15.1.1 North Pass: Passe Garuae**

**June 2021:** North Pass: We left the N. Pass at exactly 0800 which was the predicted slack tide and guess what, it was slack tide! Love when that happens. We had no current in or out and slipped right out the pass with no problems. It is a wide pass and well-marked. – Sugar Shack

**Nov. 2019:** North Pass: We arrived Fakarava at 1900 and had no choice but to heave to and wait for sunrise. We entered the N. Pass at daybreak and slack tide and found the pass to be deep and wide. Timing worked out great and we had no issues entering this pass. – Sugar Shack

**Nov. 2018:** North Pass: Wide open and in light winds seemed easy enough at all states of tide; having already seen the pass when we were up there snorkeling, we had no concerns about using it to depart after dark; wide, deep and well charted; we tracked out just east of center to avoid the worst of the overfalls at two hours before low water slack. – Moon Rebel

#### **4.15.1.2 South Pass: Passe Tumakohua**

**May 2021:** South Pass: Leaving Tahanea at slack tide 1400 put us at a night arrival. We slowed the boat down to 2-3kts after deciding not to enter the S. Pass during the 0100 slack tide. Waiting for daylight, we entered at 0615 which was 1.5 hours prior to the guestimator's estimated slack tide. We had 0 current and it was perfect conditions. – Sugar Shack

**Oct. 2018:** We left Fakarava by the south pass, using the guestimator. Current flow in the pass was a stronger ebb than the guestimator predicted, in accordance with some of the supplementary notes included with it. Even the dive operators seem to just have to watch it, to determine the day's slack. It seems to usually be an ebb. That said, it wasn't too difficult to wash on out, we saw probably 3 kts when we went through. Then a motor sail to Tahanea. We did the passes relying on the Current Guestimator. It seemed good, but generally we had to input a significant wind/wave factor to get it to match up more closely with what we observed. But this is much as noted in it, south pass generally ebbing, etc. – Kokopeli

**May 2016:** Along with two other boats, we made the pass from Kauehi by getting up very early and catching the first slack tide. The 30-mile passage was a nice beam reach, in beautiful weather. The pass went well, but turning to head into town left us going 20 degrees to the wind. We motored in. – Starry Horizons

**2010:** The South Pass at Fakarava really rips in and out. In mild wind conditions, you don't have to wait for perfect slack, but you do want to avoid strong wind against strong current. Since the pass faces SE, the outgoing current is the one to avoid at this pass.

In mild wind conditions, the low slack is about 1 hour and 15 minutes BEFORE the published Rangiroa Low Tide, with the high slack coming about 6 hours later. With the wind blowing 15-20 out of a southerly quadrant, or a large south swell, creating a 2 -knot wind/wave factor, the low slack usually is delayed about 45-minutes, and the high slack is only 5 hours later than the low slack. (these are real rough guestimates). – Soggy Paws

#### **4.15.2 Anchorages and Moorings**

**Please float your chain!** Protect the coral and prevent future damage to marine life!

And save yourself the hassle of having to unwrap your chain. Simply use fenders or old pearl farm floats (See "Anchoring Around Coral").

**Anchoring in the Fakarava administered Atolls is prohibited on coral (you may only anchor on sand) within 200m of shore.**

Anchoring is prohibited close to fish farms/parks (must be at 100m downwind & down current of any)



Anchoring is also fully prohibited in certain areas (e.g. NP zones - see maps). E.g. For FAKARAVA ATOLL In the area marked 'NP' zone: if you don't have the image then imagine Fakarava as a big rectangle. The 'NP' zone is the SW quadrant (a very short distance west of south pass, and south of Motus Topikite/Tapehoku).

Note the 'NP' zone also extends as a thin strip along the western inner atoll coast to almost the North passage.

#### **4.15.2.1 North Pass Anchorage and Town of Rotoava**

**March 2024:** All moorings that are left appear to be private. We tried to use one that was not labeled as private and were chased off by a local boat. – s/v Enjoy

**July 2022:** We didn't see the listed mooring balls; it looked like all 20-ish boats that were there were anchored. Anchorage has lots of dead, sand-colored coral, which looked like sand to us arriving at 4pm. So despite floating our chain, we managed to wrap, though not badly. – Villa Veritas

**March 2022:** There are two new moorings (installed Dec.2021) with long painters. We stayed on one while waiting for slack tide and found it to be rolly. – Sugar Shack

**June 2021: 16°03.8337S / 145°37.0897W** Anchored in 10 meters of water with 5 floats. Drug a bit before sticking, but then it held well. There are bommies on the bottom that wrapped our chain before we had a chance to put floats on so be aware. We dropped 50 meters to set, then pulled up to 25 meters to put on the floats. When we were pulling the chain up to 25m we wrapped around a bommie but were able to maneuver the boat around to get it off and put the float on.

**16°03.498SS / 145°37.222W** This was 10 meters deep and we had 5 floats. Nice sandy patch. – Sugar Shack

**Feb 2021:** There are now just two white "public" moorings at 16°3.899'S 145 37.162'W, However, the Top Dive Shop claims one of these white moorings is theirs. Don't use the red one near here, the owner does not trust it. There were a few other boats on white mooring balls north of the cardinal marker and south of the gas dock. – Trance

**Sept. 2019: 16°03.694S / 145°37.194W.** We dropped the hook in 12 meters. All of the moorings were taken and after reading the compendium, we did not feel comfortable using them anyway. – Sugar Shack

**May 2019:** In mid-April a couple of divers arrived from Papeete to inspect / service the moorings at both Roatava and the S pass. In Roatava the 3 public moorings (white floats see Kokopeli waypoints below) were inspected but the other 4 moorings that had broken free in the past few years were not renewed. There are 3 private moorings (red floats) that are used by Top Dive and 2 charter boats. The two closest to the pier are private moorings. The Top Dive mooring is close to the 3 public moorings. If you use these private moorings you may be asked to move off of them. – Jacaranda

**Feb 2019:** On a return trip to Rotoava I also checked two of the moorings there. The one closest to the pier was in excellent condition and appears to have been renewed in the last few months. Everything was new and proper. The ones in the group to the east of this all appeared to be much older showing signs of heavy usage and are reported to have been renewed a little over a year ago. – Nehenehe

**Dec. 2018:** There are now two groups of mooring buoys at Rotoava. There are about seven moorings 2,000' SE of the pier and another group of three about 500' SE of the pier. All were installed in 2015. We anchored 500' south east of the pier and felt coral vibrations on the chain in 40' of water and moved the next day to the mooring 40' away. The 1-1/4" line at this mooring looked brand new with a new SS thimble in the eye and all the moorings in the area were 'renewed' supposedly in October 2017. All

moorings are Rated up to 30 tons. There are moorings inside the North Pass to port as you enter. – Nehenehe

**Nov. 2018:** One mile east of the pass is a drying reef marked with a red post (both as charted) and there is a white/free yacht mooring immediately north of that reef, along with a dive-boat mooring; half a mile due north are two further white/yacht moorings all three appeared to be in good condition in 2018. Three white moorings immediately south of the reef/cardinal mark, there's a fourth there too (yellowish) and three NE of the reef, all of which appear to be private moorings for the dive centre and charter catamarans. Depth & visibility precluded a full check, but from what I could see, these moorings may be in need of an overhaul and wouldn't trust them in seriously rough weather. Most yachts anchored and the only ones we saw have trouble with fouled anchor/chain – including us! – were anchored inshore of the white mooring buoys, off the church/dive centre. – Moon Rebel

**October 2018:** Moorings have been installed, and are available without charge. This may be part of Fakarava's being established as a world heritage site. The moorings are as follows: (note, waypoints are Degrees Minutes Seconds, NOT Degrees Minutes Decimal Minutes). Near the village moorings, you can also anchor. It's deep (60'ish) but fairly clear of bommies – Kokopeli

#### **Pass Nord**

- 145°41'51.63" W, 16°04'29.71" S
- 145°41'39.03" W, 16°04'52.70" S

#### **Aeroporto**

- 145°39'05.62" W, 16°03'15.09" S

#### **Village Rotoava**

- 145°37'15.30" W, 16°03'38.92" S
- 145°37'10.89" W, 16°03'48.03" S
- 145°37'09.02" W, 16°03'50.46" S

**Sept. 2018:** The moorings in Fakarava at the village and the south pass are NOT maintained. A 38' sailboat had a mooring break (2018) at the south pass and ended up on the reef causing extensive damage.

In 2017 a mooring broke off the village of Rotoava and the vessel ended up on the rocks. There are fewer moorings at the village of Rotoava & the S Pass now because mooring have parted and not been replaced.

**USE EXTREME CARE** when using the moorings in N & S Fakarava, Kauehi and Aratika. The moorings were put in a few years ago by the environment service and no service has been done since. These moorings are now about 3+ years old and with no maintenance it's like playing Russian Roulette.

– Jacaranda

**2016:** The mooring balls in Fakarava & Toau are made up of a heavy 3 strand line with a large loop back spliced into it. The line is run thru a small float. It is the loop floating on the surface that you pick up using a boat hook. We have noticed some boats using a single line as a bridle on the moorings. A number of the new moorings already are showing excessive wear due to boats not attaching lines correctly. If you pick up the mooring and run a single line from the starboard side of the bow thru the mooring eye and then back to the port side of the bow it will act as a saw. As the boat moves from side to side with the wind and swell this line will also slide from side to side thru the mooring eye causing chafe. It will damage your line and also damage the mooring eye which we have seen happen to a

number of moorings both in the north and south pass. In a stiff gusty wind, this can saw through the line in only a few hours and set your boat adrift! (not to mention wrecking the mooring for all the other cruisers behind you).

To hook up to a mooring line, we run 2 lines, one from each side of the boat thru the mooring eye and then back to the same side. – Jacaranda

**Oct. 2016:** The weather forecast predicted a storm gusting up to 40 knots veering in sector NNE – NNW, so we made our way from the South Pass to the North Pass anchorage, which offers protection from that quadrant.

There are 2 mooring balls just east of the pass at Otohu Bay. We picked up a mooring being a little uncertain of its condition but local advice suggested they were good. By the time we arrived the wind conditions were too strong to dive the mooring, and so we took a chance, knowing that if necessary, we could rely on the anchor if we needed.

Fakarava was hit with winds gusting up to 70-80 knots. We saw 61 knots on our boat (an Amel 54 - 20,000 tons), but the trees on the motu that we hid behind protected us.

Unusually, it raged non-stop for 4-5 days. If there were a weather station in the Tuamoto's the storm would have been named and plotted and the locals warned. These were the highest winds Fakarava has seen for years, lasting longer than anything in living memory. Thankfully there were no casualties, although there was damage to trees, bridges, crops and buildings.

The mooring held really well, and although we used anchor alarms and were on anchor watch throughout the storm, we were safely tethered. The mooring provided excellent shelter in gale force winds, which is good news for any yachts facing storm conditions in the Tuamoto Atolls. – Asolaire

**May 2016: 16°03.274 S / 145°37.453 W.** All the mooring balls were full for us, so we headed north to anchor outside the mooring balls. When you approach the village, you will see two rows of WHITE mooring balls. One row is to the left of the wharf (north) and the other is to the right (south). (other mooring balls belong to the dive services). We started to anchor in between the mooring balls and the shore and were told (by Top Dive via VHF) that it is a small boat channel and no anchoring is allowed. The mooring balls are free to use.

**Dinghy Landing:** There are several options for your dinghy. You can use the wharf to tie up, but since the land is long and narrow, it can mean a long walk. Most of the time, people beached their dinghies. There are plenty of small beaches between buildings on the shore, including one right where the paved road curves away from the shore. This beach has low hanging branches for your painter. It is only a few blocks from Fakarava Yacht Services. – Starry Horizons

#### **4.15.2.2 Anchorage (NOT) at Pakokota Yacht Services**

**Located at: 16°13.528 S / 145°33.413 W**

**Note: As of late June 2022, Pakokota Yacht Services and Lodge is closed / sold. No more services, no more mooring balls.**

**In front of the property just south of ex-Pakokota YS, there are currently three floats that have thin line. These are not moorings, they actually have a brick tied to the pennant to sink. The owner of said property is not friendly to boats and we were asked to not anchor in front that property.**

**2010: 16°30.29S / 145°27.37W.** The first time, we were following friends, who anchored on the NE side of the pass. This anchorage is really not a very good anchorage—it is deep and corally. I can't really recommend that anchorage, except in fairly settled weather. – Soggy Paws

#### **4.15.2.3 Hirifa**

**May 2021:** **16°26.882S / 145°21.900W** dropped in 7 meters of sandy water with very few bommies. About 14 boats anchored in Hirifa hiding from the S-SE winds projected for 5 days. – Sugar Shack

**Sept. 2019:** **16°26.858S / 145°21.874W** dropped in a nice sandy spot with good holding. – Sugar Shack

**May 2018:** At the very south east corner of FAKARAVA the Motu Hirifa offers good shelter, sandy bottom and a vast turquoise lagoon with sandy islets. Nearby the lagoon Mrs. Liza, a lively and friendly lady, lives with husband and son in a nice house with large porch where she offers very good dinners on a minimum half-day advance notice at 2000/2500 CFP, highly recommended. (by Fulvio formerly sv Bulbo Matto). – Daisho

**2011:** **16°26.842 S / 145°21.869 W.** The next day we continued south on the marked channel. Within a few minutes we left the main channel at 16°21.3 S / 145°29.7 W and sailed southeast in uncharted waters according to our C-Map NT+ software. Our goal was to anchor at the extreme eastern point of the Fakarava lagoon. After leaving the main channel we stayed in 60 feet of water or more, followed the shoreline, and used eye-ball navigation. In good light the few reefs and large coral heads are obvious and easy to avoid. During this section of the coast green or red markers note MOST large reefs. We also made a few turns to avoid unmarked reefs. When we reached Hirifa at the eastern end of the lagoon we dropped our anchor in Hirifa in 20 feet of sandy bottom. There were a few coral heads in the anchorage area which could hold dozens of vessels. This location gives you great protection from wind and waves coming from the NNW, N, NE, E, SE, S, and SE. Your only significant exposure would be from strong winds from the west. – Yolo

#### **4.15.2.4 South Pass Anchorage**

**March 2023:** We were on the most western-most yellow ball, and the ball came loose. Luckily we had added our own line to the chain shackle in about 6 ft depth. The buoy's old 1.5 inch line was chafed heavily and gave up at night. There was no steel thimble to protect the rope. We tied the buoy back to the chain with our 1' ugly rope. Don't trust it, dive to check them always. – Victoria

**June 2022:** We saw 6 moorings, and as many boats anchored. – Villa Veritas

**March 2022:** **16°30.331S / 145°27.276W.** Dropped the hook in a sandy patch at 12m. There were lots of bommies around us so we added many floats. Starting at 20m and then another at every 10 additional meters. We put the bridle on at 60m. Nice breezy spot, with access to internet and the pass for diving. – Sugar Shack

**February 2021:** At **16°30.379'S / 145°27.358'W** there are three good white moorings. A little closer to the pass are two other moorings. Not sure of their condition, although the outer mooring held a 55' yacht in 10-15knots of wind out of the northeast. – Trance

**May 2019:** South pass the 6 moorings were inspected in April 2019. Unsure if any were replaced. – Jacaranda

**May 2019:** We were in Fakarava when that 38ft sailboat ripped a mooring off last year and ran into the reef. In fact, we were the only yacht in Fakarava South who was monitoring CH16; we jumped into the dinghy, woke the other boats and went to pull him off the reef.

The moorings in Fakarava are pretty short and he had tied his super tight, so when the wind changed and his boat pounded in the chop, his mooring tightened straight down and he ripped it off. His anchor alarm went off, but due to a lack of situation awareness he drove his yacht into the reef instead of deeper water (or just hovering near one of the other boats, where it was safe). The next day the crew discreetly asked us to help her leave that boat; this hadn't been the first incident. In short, that mooring did not break, it was ripped off.

We have spent many weeks on the Fakarava moorings with our 59ft cat. I dove most of them and there is nothing wrong with them if used properly. – Moana

**Feb. 2019:** At the Fakarava south pass; I dove on the mooring buoy that we temporarily tied to while waiting for slack water. I was able to just barely get down close to where the mooring buoy was tethered. (This was the second white mooring ball from the pass) There was chain wrapped around the coral head (as should be) in about 35-40 feet of water. This had a 1-1/8" braided line attached to the chain with an underwater float about five feet up the line that was meant to keep the line off the coral head. Unfortunately, the line had somehow still gotten caught under the coral head in the lowest five-foot section and the float was keeping it pinned there.

Any boat on the mooring would start pulling hard enough to start abrading the section of line that was caught under the coral. I tried to free the line but my lack of time at this depth and the force with which the float was pulling up on the line; both prevented me from freeing it or inspecting the damage that may have already occurred. I also noticed that the 1-1/8" line was only just slightly longer than what was needed to reach the surface and that this would place undue strain on the mooring system without the anchoring boat playing out a good deal of line between its bow and the tie-off loop on the mooring system.

So, I reiterate the comments not to use the moorings in the south and north without diving on them first. The one we used would be unsafe to use other than very temporarily, in settled weather, and then only with a very watchful eye – Nehenehe

**Nov. 2018:** The buoys still seem well maintained and in good order, otherwise nothing not already reported. We used the Current Guesstimator to enter the pass which seemed to work well and found pass easy/deeper than charted/well marked. – Moon Rebel

**Oct. 2018:** Moorings have been installed, and are available without charge. This may be part of Fakarava's being established as a world heritage site. The moorings are as follows: (note, waypoints are Degrees Minutes Seconds, NOT Degrees Minutes Decimal Minutes) – Kokopeli

- 145°27'19.53" W, 16°30'21.96" S
- 145°27'17.78" W, 16°30'21.23" S
- 145°27'23.30" W, 16°30'23.19" S
- 145°27'21.21" W, 16°30'22.33" S
- 145°27'30.54" W, 16°30'28.77" S
- 145°27'28.80" W, 16°30'27.00" S

**Sept. 2018:** The moorings in Fakarava at the village and the south pass are NOT maintained. A 38' sailboat had a mooring break (2018) at the south pass and ended up on the reef causing extensive damage.

In 2017 a mooring broke off the village of Rotoava and the vessel ended up on the rocks. There are fewer moorings at the village of Rotoava & the S Pass now because mooring have parted and not been replaced.

**June 2017:** The SW anchorage at the south pass as mentioned by a few is no longer an option. There is some rare coral there so in conjunction with UNESCO, it is no longer a legal anchorage. The only option is on the eastern side which is quite difficult given the densely packed bommies on that side. Boats that anchored in the SW anchorage recently were asked to move, and Fakarava Yacht Services confirmed this change. – Duplicat

**2017:** Be very sure to stay in the anchor area and don't drift too far west into the protected area (see NT area on map in link provided). Some locals advised us that this area (to west of south pass) cannot

be used as an anchorage at all. If you are found anchored where you should not be you will be moved off (may be easier to just anchor to N of south pass which gives easier access to village too. – Mary Anne II

**2017: Note:** A report from Duplicat (see above) indicates this is no longer a legal anchoring area. The much better anchorage is on the SW side of the pass. It is not hard to get in there in reasonable light, and it is shallower, more sand, less coral, and much better protection (especially from NE winds). Here are the waypoints we used:

- Wpt #1 16°29.65 S 145°28.05 W In the Fairway N of S Pass (if coming in the S pass, skip this)
- Wpt #2 16°30.27 S 145°28.55 W SW 0.8 NM, between 2 reefs
- Wpt #3 16°30.58 S 145°28.68 W SSW 0.3 NM
- Wpt #4 16°30.97 S 145°28.53 W SSE 0.4 NM
- Wpt #5 16°31.27 S 145°28.34 W SE 0.3 NM, the Anchoring area

You MUST keep a good lookout on the bow coming in, as there are isolated (but seen in light) coral heads.

**July 2016: North Side of the South Pass:** There are now 6 free moorings that are on the NE side of the pass. They are WHITE mooring balls that appear in excellent condition. The mooring line runs thru the foam mooring ball and you will need a boat hook and then loop you own line thru the spliced eye on the mooring line. Aim for Soggy Paws' lat/long and you will see the moorings spread out along the shoreline. – Jacaranda

**2011:** We successfully used your waypoints into the west anchorage at Fakarava south. However, another boat, drawing 7.5', went hard aground quite close to the 2nd waypoint at 16°30.293S 128.542W. They used an anchor to heel the boat and get off the rock, but it's quite close to waypoint #2) – Unknown Cruiser

**REPEAT: KEEP A GOOD LOOKOUT AND AVOID ISOLATED CORAL HEADS!!!**

The anchor spot given is in about 12-14 feet with good sand holding, and wide spacing between coral heads. But depending on your preferred depth, you could anchor anywhere between Wpt #4 and Wpt #5, or even go a little further in than Wpt #5.

This general area could accommodate 20 boats, and is the best place to be for bad weather. This spot has 270-degree protection, only exposed to the NW, which almost never has any strong winds.

The only downside is that there is no dinghy shortcut from the anchorage through the reef to the pass—the reef nearly dries at low water. We found a semi-shortcut, and the dinghy distance is only ¾ of a mile longer than anchoring in the coral on the N side of the pass. – Soggy Paws

**4.15.2.5 Other Anchorages**

**May 2011: 16°17.42 S / 145°30.73 W.** There is a very nice anchorage half-way between the north and south ends of Fakarava which offers excellent shelter in a north wind. It is near the motu of Kaukuraoa. We anchored in about 35 feet, with only a few coral heads. When entering this anchorage, make sure to have a lookout on the bow - there is a reef that comes to the surface in this bay, but there is plenty of room to anchor a safe distance from it. We swam to the reef and snorkeled it while there. This anchorage will likely offer good protection from the west to north to east, but it is open to the south. I would not choose this anchorage in strong southeast winds.

**Tonae. 16°15.560 S / 145°32.829 W.** From Rotoava we followed the well-marked channel heading south. Keeping the red markers to starb'd and the green markers to port resulted in a carefree voyage.

The long motu to the east minimized the chop during our entire trip. At 16°15.6 minutes south we motored a short distance due east to Tonae our first anchorage.

**Tukaega. 16°20.310 S / 145°29.742 W.** The next day we spent several more hours sailing down the coast via the marked channel. At Tukaega (16°20.3 minutes south) we left the channel and headed east. We dropped the anchor in 27 feet of water, mostly sand with a few coral heads. – Slip Away

#### **4.15.3 Passage Between the North and South Pass**

The passage from North-South or vice versa is pretty easy. There are large markers along the way (placed ON large coral heads). There are several places to anchor up and down the lee side of the east side of Fakarava.

**June 2021:** We have had the pleasure to sail both directions between the N and S pass. In June 2021, we sailed with our parasail in a S-SE light wind. Easy to navigate, but still wise to keep a look out to avoid the coral heads. Trip took less than 4 hours. – Sugar Shack

**May 2011:** Most cruisers complete a quick one-day voyage between the Fakarava south pass and the Rotoava village near the north pass. Rotoava is located at the northern tip of Fakarava and provided us with good protection from the strong winds pouring in from the east. Instead of rushing down the channel between Rotoava and the south pass, we decided to spend a few days enjoying the shoreline anchorages. – Slip Away

**2010: Out in the Middle:** Visions and Soggy Paws went exploring in the uncharted area in the middle of the atoll. Navigation—even under sail—was pretty easy. The depths are either very deep or very shallow. A good watch is required, and decent sun. We were confident we could find a good anchor spot in the middle of the atoll, but after checking several of the interior motu's, we finally ended up heading east and anchoring along the east side of the atoll. The reefs were lined up ESE-WNW (the direction the wind typically blows), making it hard to find shelter. The interior motus were small, and dropped off from 1' to 80' immediately. We couldn't find a safe place (with sufficient swinging room) for 2 boats to anchor. – Soggy Paws

#### **4.15.4 Yachtsmen Services**

June 2022: Note: Pakokota Yacht Services and Lodge in Fakarava is closed / sold. No more services, no more mooring balls. However, Fakarava Yacht Services is a different entity, and is still providing services for yachts.

##### **4.15.4.1 Cooking Gas (Propane / Butane)**

**2019:** The following three places sell cooking gas:

- **The Total gas** station at the quay is open and accepts duty-free certificates.

##### **4.15.4.2 Fuel (Diesel / Gasoline)**

**June 2022:** The gas station would not sell duty-free fuel in jerry cans, you have to bring the whole boat. – Villa Veritas

**March 2022:** Pacific Gas Station (at the dock) operating hours are Mon-Sat: 0730-1200 and 1500-1700. They do accept duty free, but be sure to check your receipt to ensure you received the duty-free discount. – Sugar Shack

**Sept. 2019:** The Total Gas Station at Quay sells diesel and gasoline. You may also purchase fuel directly from the supply ship in 200-liter drums. Fakarava Yacht Services no longer sells fuel. – Sugar Shack

**May 2019:** You can bring the vessel alongside and pump directly into the vessel tanks. The weekly supply ship (Wed) brings in diesel (can be pumped by the liter from ship) or gasoline purchased by the barrel. The gas station store usually has a terrific selection of fresh veggies about 2 hours after the ship has docked. Get there early for best selection. Fakarava Yacht Services is no longer providing fuel. – Jacaranda

#### **4.15.4.3 Fakarava Yacht Services (North Pass)**

See Cruiser Reports for additional information on Services

Aldric and Stephanie. VHF 77, +689 87 75 34 84 or +689 40 98 41 72. [www.fakayachtservices.com](http://www.fakayachtservices.com)  
[fakayachtservices@gmail.com](mailto:fakayachtservices@gmail.com). Hours: Mon-Sat: 0800-1700. Closed Sundays.

Bike and e-bike rentals, wifi, laundry, transfers and pickup airport, sail repairs, and propane. No longer provide fuel services. Internet is no longer free, but available with purchase (water, soda, shirt, services)

As of Feb 2023, they are the official dealer for Vini--selling vinicard, surfandgo, and recharges.

**Dec. 2018:** Fakarava Yacht Services is a total Gem, we love the business attitude. The internet is free but we always tried to buy something when we came, a 2000xpf flag and latte the first time and a propane fill the second time. These folks are so very kind and generous, can't say enough good things about them – Nehenehe

**May 2016:** A small house/office with a porch. The wifi is available during open hours (8 am - 5 pm) for customers. Purchasing a juice for 250 CFP qualifies us. The porch is often crowded with cruisers taking advantage of the wifi. – Starry Horizons

#### **4.15.4.4 Pakokota Yacht Services (DEFUNCT)**

**June 2022:** Pakokota Yacht Services and Lodge in Fakarava is closed / sold. No more services, no more mooring balls.

#### **4.15.4.5 Trash and Recycling**

**March 2022:** A few locals have asked cruisers NOT to dump recycling in their trash receptacles. They have no means to do any recycling despite having separate bins for glass and aluminum. So, please do not put recyclable items in their trash bins as they will end up in their already overflowing landfill. – Major Tom

**June 2021:** There is a 1000CPF fee to deposit trash on the island (for 1 week) pay at Le Mairie. Trash bins are located at the quay between the pier and white building – metal open structure. Recycling (cans and plastic) bins are located on main road and hanging from trees (black basket looking things). We did not see glass or cardboard receptacles. It appears they collect plastic in one bin and cans in another. – Sugar Shack

**Dec. 2018:** There is garbage disposal at the Wharf between the pier and the white building, it's free and labeled GARBAGE. – Nehenehe

#### **4.15.5 General Yacht Services**

Most services are located in North Fakarava unless noted below.

##### **4.15.5.1 Air Tahiti**

Air Tahiti has an office just off the main road. Hours: Mon and Fri Only: 0800-1000. Reservations: +689 40 86 41 41 or [reservation@airtahiti.pf](mailto:reservation@airtahiti.pf). From dinghy dock, turn right, then you will see the sign where you turn left. It will be on your right in a small white building.



#### **4.15.5.2 Airport Transfer**

**Migration – Dec 2023:** In Rotoava, Airport Transfer : Luther (Tuarae) Le Truck

87 24 91 61 [teariiloca@gmail.com](mailto:teariiloca@gmail.com)

Only 800 XPF per person (cheaper than other options)

Also, if you have friends coming and plan to spend time at the South Pass but don't want to go back to Rotoava to pick them up, you can contact Motu Aito for xfer to Tetamanu. They will pick up your friends at the airport and bring them to your boat anchored in Tetamanu. Go in to the resort and ask. Motu Aito is the red-roofed resort to the east of the moorings.

#### **4.15.5.3 Bank / ATM**

**June 2021:** The ATM is located at the Post office. From main dock, turn left, then make the first right turn. The post office will be on the righthand side. – Sugar Shack

**Sept. 2019:** ATM located near Poste (north side). In Roatava on the North end of Fakarava there now IS an ATM attached to the outside of the post office. It only has options to take out up to 25,000 XPF at a time, but it does work. (Jacaranda 2016 - Still 25,000 max at one time but multiple withdrawals are allowed (we did 3 withdrawals back to back). – Jacaranda

**July 2014:** In Roatava on the North end of Fakarava there now IS an ATM attached to the outside of the post office. It only has options to take out up to 25,000 XPF at a time, but it does work. (Jacaranda 2016 - Still 25,000 max at one time but multiple withdrawals are allowed (we did 3 withdrawals back to back)) – Evenstar

#### **4.15.5.4 Laundry**

**June 2022:** Fakarava Yacht Services did our laundry. The price was unremarkable, but we were not thrilled with the cleanliness or dryness. – Villa Veritas

**Sept. 2019:** Fakarava Yacht Services offer laundry services. See above for contact information. Fakarava Yacht Services has a dryer to dry heavier items (towels) and usually turn around your laundry in 1 day. Cost is about 2000xpf per load for wash/dry.

**May 2019:** Fakarava Yacht Services: Kudo's to Stephanie for the excellent laundry service - Our clothes came back very clean and folded – Jacaranda

#### **4.15.5.5 Le Mairie**

**Nov. 2019:** Le Maire (mayor's office) located from quay, turn right, on left hand side. Near Total gas Station. Maps of the surrounding atolls and their protected zones are displayed outside le Mairie. Please respect the protected zones.

Visitors are supposed to pay a "taxe de séjour" for every adult staying anywhere in the Fakarava region (including surrounding Atolls). The tax is neither communicated nor enforced, unless you show up at the mairie in Rotoava. A nominal fee of 55cfp.

Trash disposal is a fee of 1000CPF payable to Le Mairie. – Sugar Shack

#### **4.15.5.6 Medical Center**

**Medical Clinic:** Hours: Mon-Fri: 0730-1200 and 1330-1530. Location, main dock, turn left and the white building will be on the right side (with big white wall).

**May 2011:** - Rotoava (North Fakarava) now has a doctor in the village. His name is Dr. Stephane Burglin (cell 21 08 30), and his office is located about 200 meters south of the Top Dive Shop (pka Te Ava Nui Dive Shop) on the left-hand (inland) side of the street. There is a sign in the yard of his office.

Office visits cost 3600 XPF, and that often includes any medications he might give you. Each of us had separate minor medical issues for which we visited Dr. Stephane, and we found him to be very thorough in his examination and diagnosis. He speaks English pretty well and is a very personable guy. – Slipaway

#### **4.15.5.7 Post Office**

**June 2021:** Hours: Mon, Wed-Fri: 0730-1130 & 1300-1430. Tues: 0730-1130. Location: Main dock, turn left, make first right turn onto another street and post office will be on the right side. – Sugar Shack

**2019:** An ATM is located outside the poste. The PO is closed one afternoon in the middle of the week. Everything is closed on Saturday afternoon and Sunday. – Jacaranda

#### **4.15.5.8 Water**

**Sept. 2018:** There is drinking water (filtered rainwater) behind the main pier, go pay the 'taxe de séjour' first, then fill your containers. – Moana

#### **4.15.5.9 Wifi**

North and South Fakarava (including Hirifa) now have 4G internet. You can either use Vini, GoogleFi or the new [Varua Hotspot](#) plan. Fakarava Yacht Services also offers internet for a small fee.

**June. 2021:** Varua Hotspot offers internet services in Fakarava and Toau. You may pay using PayPal and using an external antenna will greatly improve your connectivity. Contact them for coverage areas.

- Unlimited data up to 1MB download, up to 512Kb/s upload 8,40€
- Unlimited data up to 3Mb/s download, up to 512Kb/s upload 16,80€
- Unlimited data up to 5Mb/s download, up to 1Mb/s upload 25,20€

Fakarava Yacht Services still offers fast internet at their offices. They request you purchase something or use one of their many available services.

In addition, we received a 4G Vini connection down in the South Pass, Hirifa, and by the village. – Sugar Shack

**Nov. 2020:** Fakarava North has 4G. The following locations offer wifi services:

- Fakarava Yacht Services offers internet for customers (8mbs)
- Tourism office offers free wifi during business hours. Located near quay & police station. N. Fakarava.
- Tumoana Market (by Total gas station)

**May 2019:** Fakarava Yacht Services has fiber optic very fast wifi 8 mbps! – Jacaranda

**Nov. 2018:** Internet at Fakarava Yacht Services, the supermarket at the quay offered a paid wifi that looked to reach the moorings and we managed a signal from Haviaki Resort. – Moon Rebel

**Oct. 2018:** We saw signs of the new fiberoptic cable that's being installed. There were two large spools of cable near the post office, marked as undersea fiberoptic. In the area of the south pass moorings we had, for the first time in French Polynesia, usable cellular wifi over our Google Fi phones(!). Still a bit slow, but definitely there. Maybe it's the first sign of the new fiberoptic cable that's being installed – Kokopeli

**2016:** Available at Fakarava Yacht Services - You can bring your computer and sit on their comfortable porch in a lounge chair. See Fakarava Yacht Services below in the guide. – Jacaranda

**May 2016:** Fakarava Yacht Services is available during open hours (8 am - 5 pm) for customers. Purchasing a juice for 250 CFP qualifies us. The porch is often crowded with cruisers taking advantage of the wifi. – Starry Horizons

#### **4.15.6 Provisions**

**Supply ship** comes on Wednesdays as of Oct. 2020.

**Magasin Rotoava** +689 40.984.273. Hours: 0700-1130 & 1500-1530. Closed Sundays. Decent market, little more expensive than Tumoana. Order bread and eggs if not available. Decent selection of local liquors and home goods.

**Tumoana Market** Hours: Mon-Sat: 0730-1700 closed Sundays. (part of Pacific Gas Station at dock). Decent market with some fishing gear, home goods, clothing, oil. They do not sell beer.

**Boulangerie Haviki** +689 40 98 42 56. Hours: Mon-Sat: 0500-1200 & 1500-1730. Location: From dinghy dock, turn right and you will see Boulangerie Haviki on your right about ½ mile down the road. Bakery, decent market, little bit of hardware and home goods.

Tip: Call the day before to order bread (baguette or pain de mie [loaf]), pain au chocolate, croissant, pain au raisin). They will hold your order for you and you don't have to go in at an early hour.

**Faka Faapu:** +689.87.32.56.78 Sophie. Hours: Mon-Sat: 0700-1400; Sun: 0800-1200. Across from Top Dive. Pre-order fruits and veggies. Email: [fakafaapu@hotmail.fr](mailto:fakafaapu@hotmail.fr). Speaks English & eager to please.

**Heirava Shop Magasin** Hours: Mon-Fri: 1430-1600, Sat: 0700-1100, Sun: 0530-1100. Location: From dinghy dock, turn right, make first left, then next right (on 2<sup>nd</sup> street from water). This is a counter service magasin, but it is open daily.

**Local Vegetables:** Several locals have farms on Fakarava. Yolande sets up a stand in the parking lot of the gas station on Wednesdays. You can also call her and place orders. Yolande: 87 76 84 76. Also try calling Vaihere for veggies: 87 28 44 90

**Fruit stand** near Te Ava Dive

**June 2022:** Sofie is no longer the veggie lady; she is out of business. For fresh lettuce, call or Whatsapp Lindsey, +689-87-22-08-07. Big bags, maybe 3 heads, for 500xpf.

**2016:** Provisioning is decent here - I bought the first gala apples I'd seen since the Galapagos in Magasin Rotoava. The Boulangerie Havaiki is well stocked too. There is also a produce stand called Faka Fa'apu with a good selection of fruits and vegetables. – Starry Horizons

**Oct. 2010:** There are 3 grocery stores, all on the south side of town. In 2010, we used a small beach to the south of the town dock for the dinghies, as it was much closer to the stores. The most frequented store is Magasin Rotoava, though you do have to go to all 3 stores to make sure you have found

everything there is to find. And if you are very price conscious, there are price differences. I think Magazin Rotoava will accept US dollars and maybe Euros, as well as credit cards. But ASK FIRST.

All the stores keep their meats in top loading freezers that are unmarked. If you see a freezer, open it up and take a peek. Usually the prices are posted nearby (in French) somewhere.

Almost across the street from Magazin Rotoava is the Boulangerie Havaiki. This is a bakery, and has recently expanded to have a grocery store, with frozen meat products from NZ, and a good selection of veggies. They have plans to expand further later this year. If you get there early in the morning, you might be able to find baguettes without ordering them ahead, but the best way to ensure having baguettes is order and pay for your baguettes the day before. Both Margaret and Coco, the owners, speak English.

A hundred meters further south out of town, across from the Te Ava Nui dive shop, is a veggie and fruit stand. Turn left here and go up the side road, and there is a 3rd grocery store. They have more floor space and maybe more freezer space, so meats and refrigerated stuff might be easier to find here.

Veggies available when the weekly supply ship gets here are: onions, potatoes, carrots, cucumbers, green peppers (sometimes), cabbage (sometimes), apples, pears. Every grocery store gets an allotment when the ship comes in, but it is usually all gone 12 hours later.

There are also a number of private individuals in town that grow vegetables in their back yards, for sale. We found some both north and south of town. Look around and ask around. One popular lady in 2010 was 'Hawaya', about a quarter mile north of the town dock. She had fresh tomatoes, eggplant, leafy lettuce, bok choy, bananas, papayas, mint.

We also went south of town to find another vegetable farm owned by Mr. Topaz. Take your dinghy to the dock at Pension Havaiki, about a mile south of the anchorage, and walk out to the main road, and turn right. The farm is about 200 yards south on the main road. There we found Mr. Topaz working in his gardens. He is growing tomatoes, eggplant, cucumbers, and papayas. At his house, ¼ mile north of the farm, he also has citrus and bananas.

During peak cruiser season (late May, June, early July) the gardens tend to get picked over. And they are always expensive. – Soggy Paws

#### **4.15.7 Restaurants**

**Hirinaki Lounge and Tapas Restaurant** is a new Tapas restaurant and bar. +689 87 79 31 81 and [hirinaki-lounge.fakarava@hotmail.com](mailto:hirinaki-lounge.fakarava@hotmail.com). Hours: Mon-1100-1400, Thurs-Sun: 1100-1400 & 1730-2100. Closed Tuesday and Wednesday. It is located in Rotoava and run by a family trying to make a successful eatery. Also, on Facebook (hirinaki lounge). From main dock, turn right and it will be on the right-hand side. Beautiful wood building that you enter from the lagoon side.

- **June 2021:** What a spectacular setting, beautifully decorated eatery! An absolute delight and complete surprise to find in Fakarava! Service was brilliant, food was delicious, and atmosphere astounding. We visited several times and were always very pleased with the experience. – Sugar Shack

**Le Fare des delices** +689 24 87 55. Hours: Mon-Sat: 0900-1400. From main dock, turn right and they are on the left. They sell paninis, sandwiches, ice-cream and sorbet.

**Le Pailotte** (bright pink/purple building) This restaurant has closed as of Oct. 2019. The new owners are renovating, but could not discern what the new business would be or when it would open.

- **2016:** Pailotte (mentioned by Starry Horizons, below) is owned and operated by a French woman that used to have a restaurant in Paris. This is a great place to meet for a sundowner.

Plus, they have a small dinghy dock available for cruisers to use that are eating at her place. Look for the bright pink/purple building on the lagoon side. – Jacaranda

- **May 2016:** We had an excellent meal at a new cafe, Paillotte, just a block south of the bend in the road. The cafe serves ice cream, paninis, and crepes, and has wifi available. We thought lunch was delicious and reasonably priced. – Starry Horizons

**Rotoava Grill:** +689 87.76.80.76. Hours: Mon-Sat: 1100-1400. Fri, Sat & Sun: 1800-2100. From quay, turn right, on right hand side.

- **2016:** Rotoava Grill: If you are hungering for a good hamburger try Rotoava Grill. We had a great hamburger, fries and salad. Even came back the next evening for a repeat. Its located next to the first store south from the town quay. – Jacaranda

**Toa Pizza Fakarava** +689 37 35 46 or +689 87 37 3546. Hours: Tues-Sun: 1800-2100. Offers a variety of pizzas ranging from \$12-\$16. Location: From main dock, turn right, walk past the boulangerie and it will be on your left hand side.

**Havaiki Pearl** Farm and Guest House +689 40 93 40 15 [www.havaiki.com](http://www.havaiki.com).

- **June 2022:** Havaiki deserves a mention: their main restaurant got bad reviews from a friend, but for lunch, they do a good burger or poke bowl at the bar. And their in-water palapas are instagram ready. – Villa Veritas

**Pension Teramanu** (Annabelle's Place) offers lunch

- **May 2017:** Annabelle does not have/sell eggs anymore. We had a nice buffet lunch at her place for 3.000 francs each. Try to make a reservation, as seating is limited. – Spunky
- **May 2011:** Pension Teramanu (Annabelle's place) has a mooring at the South Pass - actually in the pass, just across from their dock. I think it is free of charge and available on a first come/first served basis, but I'm sure there is an expectation that anyone who uses it will either dive with their dive shop or eat a meal or two at their restaurant. They serve lunch for 1800 xpf per person, dinner for 2000 xpf per person, and dives cost 5500 xpf per person. When we experienced north and northwest winds while at the south pass, the boat that was tied to the mooring ball seemed to be having a much smoother ride than the rest of us – Slipaway

**South Fakarava - Hirifa**

**Hirifa Lounge Fakarava** +689 87 79 31 81, [hirinaki-lounge.fakarava@hotmail.com](mailto:hirinaki-lounge.fakarava@hotmail.com), [Facebook Page](#). Run by Liza who visits when she is not at her main residence in N. Fakarava.

- **Nov 2023:** Reservations only. Food is good. Nice location. - Migration
- **May 2018:** Nearby the lagoon Mrs. Liza, a lively and friendly lady, lives with husband and son in a nice house with large porch where she offers very good dinners on a minimum half-day advance notice at 2000/2500 CFP, highly recommended. – Daisho

**Motu Aito Paradise** (South Pass) open for lunch and dinner (with 5-6 hours' notice) daily (except when they have no guests). Very nice, sheltered dining space. Run by Vaiete. +689 87 21 6262 or [motu-aito@mail.pf](mailto:motu-aito@mail.pf). All you can eat pizza 2500fr or dinner 3500fr.

- **Oct. 2020:** We had a group of 20 cruisers and opted for the pizza only flat rate. Their oven broke and they had to cook the pizzas in their personal oven which took a long time. But they were friendly and the pizzas were about average. – Sugar Shack
- **July 2016:** Pension Motu Aito (South pass) now has a wood fired pizza oven. We really enjoyed the pizza and can recommend it. They often do not respond to calls on the VHF so you need to take your dinghy in to arrange a dinner. 24hours advance notice is required – Jacaranda

- **2010:** Pension Motu Aito Paradise (<http://www.fakarava.org/>) is a lovely Polynesia-style hotel just ashore from the above anchor spot (it had a red roof in 2010)—with just a few rooms, but nicely appointed and lovely service. Manihi invites cruisers to come ashore for a nice Polynesian lunch or dinner—he prefers groups of 8-10 people at a time and you must schedule it ahead—try calling him on VHF Channel 08, or go in and talk to them – Soggy Paws

#### 4.15.8 Activities

##### 4.15.8.1 Diving and Snorkeling

- Top Dive (North Pass) [www.topdive.pf](http://www.topdive.pf)
- Top Dive (South Pass) +689 70.99.33 and VHF 9
- Te Ava Nui Dive (North Pass) [divingfakarava.com](http://divingfakarava.com). [www.divingfakarava.com](http://www.divingfakarava.com)
- Fakarava Dive Center (South Pass) small and personal. [www.fakarava-diving-center.com](http://www.fakarava-diving-center.com)
- Renata Diving (Hirifa South pass) operator: Mattius +689 87.70.15.08
- Te Tamanu Dive Center (South pass) offers beers & shark pool. [www.tetamanuvillage.pf/us/dive.htm](http://www.tetamanuvillage.pf/us/dive.htm) They offered to fill tanks, but they didn't have "yolk" fittings. They had "din" fittings. Cost 1500fr

**Nov 2023 - Dive Tank Fills:** Vincent at KAINA DIVE just to the north of the quay in Rotoava will fill your tanks for far less than Top Dive.

Top Dive at Motu Aito at will fill your tanks at the South Pass. The other resort by the pass will not fill non-French tanks. – Migration

**June 2022:** The dive shops at the south pass were in turmoil, as the resort's shop had effectively closed the day before we arrived. We dove the pass with Enata, who we don't recommend: they were expensive and rushed the dives. But they did show us to the shark observatory cave, which was awesome and we wouldn't have found on our own. Highly recommend diving this pass, even if you have to tow a dinghy; surface support is better though.

For the North pass we dove with Top Dive, and we thought they did a great job. If you're diving with nitrox, don't miss Ali Baba canyon, which was an amazing shark observatory at about 80 feet. Our friends dove the day after us and saw a whale shark outside the pass, though with a different shop who they did not recommend. – Villa Veritas

**Oct. 2019:** South Pass Dive shop: **Tetamanu Village** (<http://www.tetamanuvillage.pf/us/dive.htm>). We heard that they would fill tanks, but the one worker we found said he did not have the correct fitting. Another boat asked another worker (who knew where the fitting was) & filled their tanks. – Sugar Shack

**Nov. 2018:** Snorkeling at/in the North pass was OK – I thought the South Pass far better – but the highlight was the reef beside the red marker 1M east of the pass, an absolute maze of twisted coral bommies with lots of fish and small sharks. Inshore reefs were good too, but that outer reef was one of the best we've found in the Tuamotus. Friends who dove and snorkeled both advised: South Pass is the better snorkel, whilst North Pass the more spectacular dive. – Moon Rebel

**Oct. 2018:** We did drift dives in the north pass with **Kaina Plongee**, they were great! Located north of the town's main wharf. At the south pass, we did drift dives with Mattius of **Enata Diving**, phone number +689 87 70 150 8. They're now based at Hirifa. They picked us up and dropped us off at our boats, on the moorings. – Kokopeli

**2017:** This is not so much a village as a collection of dive huts and hut style accommodation - but oh, so beautiful!! There is also a nice little church and graveyard here The hut that stands out on the water

(inner east corner of south pass) and has the banner 'Tetamanu Dive Center' serves fixed meals (buffet style / no menu) but you need to reserve for either Lunch (3,000CPF) or Dinner (3,500 CPF). In the afternoons you can get cold beers here and enjoy the view (But don't turn up with wet feet)

After not getting a response from the local dive shop we successfully snorkeled without dinghy or guide on the south pass (on incoming tide) - swam ashore from boat, walked through 'town' and entered the pass at the shallow spit just beyond the church and let the current drift us in. We saw plenty of healthy coral, colorful fish, and of course sharks (black tip and reef sharks).

There are sharks around the anchorage and in the pass. However, the most sharks we saw and most easily photographed were all-in knee-deep water just inside of Tetamanu Dive Center shack (the shack throws snacks out the window). We also spent some time snorkeling just in 1-3 m near the anchorage (we were east of pass and west of Top Dive shack, inshore of the mooring balls) where we came across our first Tuamotu Moray eel who was very good at keeping well out of his hole for photo ops. – Mary Anne II

**July 2016: 16°30.6871 S / 145°27.9957 W.** We recently discovered a terrific snorkeling spot at the South Pass of Fakarava. Thanks to Tom & Sylvia on SV Cinnabar for turning us on to it. Located just around the second range marker (furthest in - Red tower SW side of pass) is a bight in the reef that is out of the current and when the tide it is flooding full of fish and sharks. There is a number of sandy spots further into the bight that you can anchor your dinghy in 10'. Its shallow, full of bommies and very clear. As long as you do not swim out into the channel you will find this spot with little current. Do a couple drift snorkels in the pass and then on the last one drift down to this spot and have a look – Jacaranda

**May 2016:** Snorkeling the Pass: We arrived at the south pass and choose the North East side of the pass. By talking to other cruisers, we discovered that the mooring balls were free. The depth was 40 feet and coral heads were abundant, so we picked up a mooring ball. Snorkeling south of the mooring balls was excellent, with sharks and large grouper.

Drift the pass. We dinged to the northwest side of the pass until we found a mooring ball. We did not use the mooring ball, but jumped out and dragged our dinghy behind us. We were at slack tide, and we really had no current. The pass forms a V-shaped trench. The base of the trench is a narrow strip of sand and the sides were coral. We didn't see as many sharks as we were expecting but we did see some. The water was too deep for us to really get a view. We continued to swim through the pass and followed the trench until we hit a coral plateau on the north side. The coral was 20 feet deep and stretched as far as the eye could see. Black tipped reef sharks and gray reef sharks swam above the coral, and with the excellent visibility the view was much better than in the trench. We saw up to 20 sharks. The area between the plateau and the trench is a steep drop off, and also provides a great view. – Starry Horizons

**2010:** There are (at least) three dive shops at the N end of Fakarava (below). – Soggy Paws

**Te Ava Nui** (<http://www.divingfakarava.com>) located at the south end of town. We contracted Te Ava Nui for a package of 3 dives since the pass at the north end of Fakarava is much further from the anchorage. With 5 of us and 3 dives each, we managed to negotiate a package price of \$50 US a dive, using our equipment and their tanks.

Te Ava Nui is the biggest outfit, so they always have dives going someplace. Typically, they want to you do the outside-the-pass dive with them first, so they can assess your ability and comfort in the water. Their pass dive is quite challenging. They do not time the dive for slack current, so you are often diving in fairly strong current. And the first stop of the dive is at 100', which is pretty deep for a novice diver. They basically take you to the bottom quickly, and anchor you there holding on for dear life to the dead

coral to watch the sharks and other pelagic fish. After 10 minutes of flapping in the current, the group lets go and drifts a fast drift up to about 70'. Toward the end of the dive, there is a depression in the bottom, and they take you down into this area to get out of the current and give you some time to look around.

There are 2 other dive outfits at the north end. These two are almost side-by-side about 3 miles south of town. You can anchor in this area, but then it's a long hike to town.

- **Top Dive** (<http://www.topdive.pf>), associated with Sunset Beach Resort has good reviews
- **Fakarava Diving Center** (<http://www.fakarava-diving-center.com>) has good reviews. This is a smaller outfit with a more personal touch. On scubaboard.com they got rave reviews, but you probably need to book them in advance to make sure you get the dives you want in a limited time.

All 3 north Fakarava dive shops also make trips to the south pass. Typically, this is done as a 2-dive all-day trip, for about 2.5 times the normal cost of a 1-dive north pass dive.

**2010: 16°31.086S 145°27.679W** is the waypoint for our dives. Our preference overall was the South Pass, hands down. The ability to wait for slack current and drift more slowly was a big one. So, if you only have time for one or two dives, our recommendation is the South Pass.

We did 4 dives at the South Pass in Fakarava, and each dive got better. 3 of the dives were on the low tide slack and one was on the high tide slack. Best clarity was on the high tide slack... go just before the end of the flood, when all the clean ocean water has been washing in for the past 6 hours. You just need to be careful not to mis-time it, and end up being carried out on a strong ebbing tide

Basically, we estimate the time of slack, get to the pass a little early, where you can actually see the conditions, and wait until it looks about right. Once the current slows, we get the rest of our gear ready, wetsuits on, etc, and take the dinghy into the pass, a little up-current from where we want to be. Then, without anchoring, we jump in the water, go down quickly, and then do the dive, drifting with the current and towing the dinghy behind us on a 100' leash. With the light winds we've had, towing the dinghy is not hard at all. It drifts at about the same pace we do, 75 feet below it.

If the sea is calm you can start a little further out, but on a day with any offshore wave action, be careful going further out. This spot is over a big sand trench that is easily visible from the surface. From here, once on the bottom, you head for the NE side of the pass (the one with buildings). We heard that other side of the pass is good too, but the NE side was so good, we never got to the SW side. On the best dive we had, the visibility was over 100', that's double or triple the visibility on a typical 'good vis' Florida dive!

The big attraction of the South Pass is the sharks. There are over a hundred fairly docile sharks just hanging out in the pass. Mostly gray reef sharks, some black tips and some white tips. Once you're tired of watching the sharks (thankfully, they just sit there mostly), there is a nice sloping wall full of coral and lots and lots of fish. And at the end of the dive, about a half mile of 15' reef. In the shallower water after the incoming current has picked up, you just fly over this part.

Tetamanu Village Dive shop (South Pass) declined to fill our tanks. Liability issues, they claimed. They did encourage us to dive with them, but we didn't see that they added much value to our approach with the dinghy. Though a first dive with them would probably be a nice way to get your feet wet. – Soggy Paws



#### 4.15.8.2 Points of Interest

- **Kite Spot** – Great kite spot at the E corner of the Fakarava atoll near Hirifa on the sand at 145°22.25W 16°27.34S. - Moana
- **Catholic Church** - Don't miss the Catholic Church all decked out in Polynesian influence!
- **Artisan Arts and Craft** located off the quay (turn left near police). Hours: Sat and Sun 1200-1800
- **Artisan Markets**
  - **Tresor Kaina Fakarava** +689 87 32 56 78 and [tresorkaina@mail.pf](mailto:tresorkaina@mail.pf). Hours: Mon-Sat: 0800-1300. offers a variety of handmade Polynesian clothing including shirts, dresses, shorts for both men and women. Location: Across from Top Dive
  - **Boutique Evasion Fakarava** +689 61 01 11 [Facebook page](#). Offers a variety of jewelry and clothing. Location near main dock, turn right, on right side. White building with black designs.
- **Bike Rentals**
  - Fakarava Yacht Services: bikes and E-bikes. Rates 1000fr/ ½ day and 1500fr/full day
  - Te Arii Location rents bikes, but we never saw them open

#### 4.15.8.3 Pearls and Pearl Farms

**Hinano Pearl Farm Tours:** +689 87 71 68 41. They pick up every day from Fakarava Yacht Services who can help arrange the tour. Hinano picks up cruisers every day from FYS and brings them to the farm for a tour. We found it very informative, and free, but of course, they are hoping you purchase pearls. There are a wide variety of qualities available, so no need to break the bank.

**June 2022:** Hinano is no longer an active pearl farm, though they will still tell you about the process and sell their remaining stock at market prices. – Villa Veritas

**2019 verified (May 2011):** We went on the pearl farm tour at **Hinano Pearls** with Gunther and also purchased some pearls from him. – Slipaway

**Heipoe Pearls (aka Dream Pearls)** is another pearl store/farm in N. Fakarava. We initially steered clear of that store because it looks pretty upscale, and we thought their prices would be higher. However, at the recommendation of Margaret in the Boulangerie, we decided to check it out. Dream Pearls' prices were very comparable to Hinano's. The owners Lucien (Lulu) who is Swiss and Emilienne (Mimi) Steiner is French. Their absolutely delightful, but English is limited, but passable. They also offer a tour of their pearl farm. – Slipaway

**Havaiki Pearl Farm and Guest House** +689 40 93 40 15 [www.havaiki.com](http://www.havaiki.com). This pearl farm was established in 1989 and offers a lovely pearl farm tour if prearranged ahead of time. Hugo, the tour guide will take you to the breeding lines for pearl fishing. And will provide an authentic demonstration along with a lemon tasting. You can even play the lottery with Hugo and take home your pearl. YoThey have a beautiful pension, boutique, café, lounge tables in the water, and a long dock. The boutique is open at 1730 Mon-Fri and sometimes by request. The boutique sells a variety of pearl jewelry.

**2016:** FYS can help you arrange a pearl farm tour. Hinano picks up cruisers every day from FYS and brings you to the farm for a tour. We found it very informative, and free, but of course, they are hoping you purchase pearls. There are a wide variety of qualities available, so no need to break the bank. – Starry Horizons

#### **4.15.9 Cruiser Reports**

**June 2022:** Note: Pakokota Yacht Services and Lodge in Fakarava is closed / sold. No more services, no more mooring balls. (However, Fakarava Yacht Services is a different entity, and is still providing services for yachts.)

In front of the property just south of ex-Pakokota YS, there are currently three floats that have thin line. These are not moorings, they actually have a brick tied to the pennant to sink. The owner of said property is not friendly to boats and we were asked to not anchor in front that property.

**July 2013:** Anchorage on the SW side of the pass was a favorite of ours in 2010 when we were one of only a handful of boats who ventured over to this side of the pass. Most cruisers opt to anchor in deeper water to the east of the pass in front of Manihi's lovely pension/restaurant amidst the fir trees he and his wife planted on their motu. But this season we found many more boats were anchoring on the west side in spite of the longer dinghy ride for snorkeling/diving the pass. Neville and Catherine of Dream Time, along with help from several other cruisers, created the Fakarava Yacht Club beach "bar" on a sandy motu. We enjoyed many bonfire evenings there and we hope it survives cyclone season to open in time for next season's visitors. – Naki

**May 2011:** The local families showed us around their homes, made sure we drank out of freshly hacked coconuts, viewed the six-foot shark inside the fish pen, sampled a few crabs, etc. Walking the sandy beach was good exercise and you can avoid the no-see-em's if you visit from 1000 to 1600. During the early evening the locals build fires to help reduce the local bug population before they retire for the evening. Given permission we placed our large bag of garbage in their fire. If you have tin cans or bottles with screw-on caps, give them to the locals. They use them as plant starter pots and beer containers. If you want, the resort will send a shuttle boat to your yacht and take you ashore for a traditional dinner which costs 3,000 XPF (without drinks).

About 7 miles west of Hirifa is the Fakarava south pass. We again followed the shoreline in 65 feet of water or more and avoided the main large obstacles with red or green markers on them. Eye-ball navigation between Hirifa and the south pass was easy given good light. – Yolo

### **4.16 Aratika (Pass, Village)**

#### **Guide Books:**

- South Pacific Anchorages: Warwick Clay, 2nd ed; page 29
- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 80-81
- Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia: 2001, pg 65-68

#### **4.16.1 Pass**

##### **Aratika has two passes.**

- The west pass called Tamaketa
- The east pass called Passe Fainukea. There is a channel that runs from one pass to the other.

Aratika is a daysail from Toau. Charlie's Charts says that both passes are 'challenging for the experienced cruiser and hazardous for the first-time sailor'.

**Nov. 2020:** The west pass was straightforward. It is narrow and gets to 12' depth in one spot, but otherwise no problem. It is very obvious when the current is running as standing waves occur, even in light winds. We were lucky in that it was slack tide when we arrived. Another boat was waiting to enter and the supply ship was just leaving. We were prepared to wait for slack tide, but luckily, we did not

have to do that. Even though this is a narrow pass, if you enter at the right time it should be no problem.  
– Hoodoo

**Aug. 2018:** We had no problems with the west pass—we believe it may have an unfair reputation. It was about 50 meters wide and well-marked. We entered about 3 hours before the flow stopped (tide change?) on an outgoing flow and only had about 4kts of current. There was no swell or wind at the time. Apparently, it can flow at 8kts at times. On entering take the left-hand fork in the pass. None of the locals recommended using the Eastern pass. Aratika was our best visit of the Tuamotus. – Chaos

**2010:** Both passes have outgoing current except at HW springs. The outward current can reach 8 knots or more, the east pass is the deeper at 7m but is narrow & winding. The edges are outlined by fish traps. The W pass is straight & beacons, as is the lagoon. Depth in W pass is 4.5m min. Both passes are only about 25 meters wide. Our recommendation is to only attempt the east pass if winds are 15 knots or less, and if the light is good. We entered 3 hours after low water springs & while the ocean swell was low, & found 2 knots ingoing. We found entry straightforward but a bit heart-stopping as you can't see the channel until you're at its entrance. There is some interesting snorkeling just inside this entrance but watch the currents. Sailing across the lagoon is easy. – White Princess

#### **4.16.2 Anchorages and Moorings**

**NEVER ever assume that a mooring is good without inspecting it.  
Boats are wrecked every year while crossing the Pacific due to trusting a mooring.  
If you must anchor, please float your chain.**

Protect the coral and prevent future damage to marine life! And save yourself the hassle of having to unwrap your chain. Simply use a fender or old pearl farm float (See “Anchoring Around Coral” for details).

**Nov/Dec 2020** - All the moorings looked new and sturdy and we were told that the mayor prefers boats to use them when possible.

There are 2 yellow moorings just inside the west pass behind a small reef.

There are 6 yellow moorings in the NE corner near the east pass, 4 to the north and 2 to the south. The moorings are very well spaced out and in excellent condition.

Further moorings are available at the village, located in the middle of the north motu. – Ari B

**Nov. 2020: West Pass: 15°29.277S / 145°34.329W.** There are (2) large, yellow mooring balls just inside the pass- we took one of them. The moorings looked “official” and were marked with “max capacity 18 meters.” Yanell dove down, checked the line, and everything looked good. There is a large bit of reef that actually does a good job of cutting the chop in an east breeze. We stayed on the mooring for a few days with 15-20kts of wind from the east and found it to be quite comfortable.

We looked along the shore in both directions from the pass but it was really deep (around 50-75') and coral all around. There appears to be a small sandy spot mixed in with all the coral to the north of the pass, the depth was 50' but you would have to float your chain to avoid getting wrapped around the surrounding bommies.

**East Pass (near the town):** Look for the antenna to locate the town. There are (5) large, yellow moorings. Two to the west of the town pier and 3 to the east. Yanell dove on the east pass mooring as well and it was in good condition as well. The depth is around 25' so you can anchor as well. – Hoodoo

**Aug. 2018:** Town has a small Breakwater that gives a sheltered tie-up. We stayed there for 3 days. Its depth is 2 Meters on the inside of the breakwater. It would pay to check it out by tender before you went in. – Caos

#### **4.16.3 General Services**

##### **4.16.3.1 Le Marie**

**Nov. 2020:** In the village by the town dock is Le Marie. – Hoodoo

##### **4.16.3.2 Post Office (OPT)**

**Nov. 2020:** In the village by the town dock is OPT. – Hoodoo

##### **4.16.3.3 Wifi**

**Dec 2020:** We could receive emails and WhatsApp messages using Vini, but the signal is 2G and weak. – Ari B

**Nov. 2020:** There is no wifi here, but our GoogleFi had a very, very weak signal. – Hoodoo

#### **4.16.4 Provisions**

**Nov. 2020:** In the village, by the town dock is a small magasin. There were no fresh goods. – Hoodoo

**Aug. 2018:** The supply ship “Cobia 3” (approx 50m long) that services the atoll biweekly uses this pass, and exits at night. The Atoll has no services but you could possibly order stuff to arrive on the supply boat. There are 2 very small shops selling some supplies but nothing frozen because there is no power. – Caos

#### **4.16.5 Cruiser Reports**

**Nov/Dec 2020** - The snorkeling is excellent in the east pass with slack or incoming current. The pass is very narrow and there is a sheer drop off on the outside. During very settled conditions, the visibility in the pass was amazing and it was flat calm. A few days later, with a 15 to 20 knot easterly wind, we observed standing waves in the pass on the ebb and the ebb lasted over 8 hours. The snorkeling is also quite good on the bommies inside the east pass. – Ari B

**Nov. 2020:** There is no power on Aratika. We snorkeled around the western pass and anchorage and found lots of small fish and really interesting topography. We also snorkel/drifted the east pass which had more fish and sea life than the western pass. We were the only boat at the west pass, but when we took a mooring on the east pass, there was a charter boat and another cruiser with us. Snorkel during an incoming tide to ensure clear waters. – Hoodoo

**Aug. 2018:** Aratika was our best visit of the Tuamotus. The atoll is not frequented by cruisers & only gets about 3 boats per year. The locals are super friendly. We met some locals Herve & Temarama & had an amazing few days with them, they are what made our stay so great at Aratika. They took us to collect coconut crabs, spearfishing & even cooked us some local cuisine. Temarama taught our daughter to hoola & our son to weave. Herve speaks good English & is worth calling when you get to the atoll. They will try to help you with whatever you need while at Aratika ph +689 89 56 15 50. – Caos

#### **4.17 Toau / Anse Amyot (Pass)**

##### **Guide Books**

- South Pacific Anchorages: Warwick Clay, 2nd ed; page 29 “The pass into this lagoon (Passe Otuigi) is notorious and is considered dangerous by the locals. It should only be attempted right at slack water.”
- Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia: 2001, pg. 80-84
- Charlie’s Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 82-83

#### 4.17.1 Pass

**Toau has three passes.**

**Passe Otuigi (SE)** is situated on the southeast side of the atoll. The pass is 6-8 meters deep and .4nm wide. Be careful entering/exiting this pass when winds blow easterly as currents are rather strong (3-4kt) and provoke a disagreeable tidal range.

**Passe Fakatahuna (SE)** this is right next to Passe Otugi. It is a little narrower, shallower, and has no range or channel markers. Most boats will use Passe Otugi.

**Anse Amyot (False Pass)** is located on the northwest side of the atoll and has depths ranging from 7-25 meters. It has a coral bank of less than 8 meters that opens into a closed basin of 200 meters wide. It is well marked with both red/green markers and range markers.

##### 4.17.1.1 False Passe Anse Amyot

Gaston and Valentine live in this small cove and provide the moorings for cruisers for a small fee.



*Figure 2 False Pass Anse Amyot*

**Nov. 2020:** Entry is pretty straight forward into the false pass. It has red/green markers and range markers. The shallowest spot we came across was 7 meters. There are 7 mooring balls available as well as places to drop the hook. We came in at 0500 with no issues after a terrific passage from Tao. – Sugar Shack

**July 2013:** The lights on both leading marks are out. The red and green entry pilings are both unlit. Entering at night in anything but the calmest conditions is not recommended. (Update; the light on the back leading light worked for one night, but it is intermittent). – Nakia

**2010:** Entry is easy with red and green posts marking the entry, and a lighted range (white posts with green lights at night) to guide you in. During daylight it is very easy to enter, with the shallow areas very clearly distinguishable from the good spots. – Soggy Paws

#### **4.17.1.2 Pass Otuigi – SE Pass**

**June 2021:** We entered the pass at exactly the wrong time according to the guestimator which predicted its highest current at 4.9kt of incoming current. Lucky for us it was a beautiful entrance with 2-2.5kts of incoming current, no standing waves. We lined up the cardinal markers and stayed on the Navionics line. The current was pushing us a bit to starboard but not enough to throw us off course. Our friends followed us in 30 minutes later and had 2kts of incoming current, no issues. Nice wide path and well-marked. – Sugar Shack

**Sept. 2016:** We sailed over from Fakarava in a 15kt NE breeze and hit the pass at almost full ebb. Meaning current against wind and swell. By staying to the far-left hand side (south side) of the pass, we were able to motor sail in fairly calm conditions with no standing waves. Minimum depth we saw on the southern side was 8 meters. – Jacaranda

**2010:** The comments in the South Pacific Anchorages are gibberish. There is nothing wrong with Otugi pass (as long as you get your timing right). We entered 3 hours after low water with 25 knots of wind and steep seas behind us, and had about 2.5 knots of ingoing current (we wouldn't attempt Aratica in those conditions). Entry couldn't have been easier; you need to watch the cross-current at the entrance, but the pass is wide & straightforward & has a leading line to guide you in. Minimum depth in the pass was 8 meters, & the lagoon is deep (mostly around 20m) with few shallow areas which are easily avoided. – White Princess

#### **4.17.2 Anchorages and Moorings**

##### **Please float your chain.**

Protect the coral and prevent future damage to marine life!

And save yourself the hassle of having to unwrap your chain. Simply use a fender or old pearl farm float.

##### **4.17.2.1 False Pass: Anse Amyot Anchorage and Moorings**

**Nov. 2021:** Ten (10) new moorings have been installed with a rating of up to 18m. New bright yellow floats with a 1" solid line. – Sugar Shack

**Jan 2021:** There are seven mooring buoys available 500xpf per night. - Trance

**Nov. 2020: 15°48.21S / 146°09.08W.** We picked up a mooring as we heard they were well maintained and in good condition. We swam on it and found it to be true! There were 7 moorings when we arrived as well as plenty of spots to drop the hook. The reef surrounds this anchorage and there are many bommies-so floating your chain is recommended if you anchor. Valentine mentioned that the government would be installing 10 more moorings in 2021. The fee, during low season, for the mooring was 500xpf per night. – Sugar Shack

**Dec. 2018:** There were five mooring buoys available at this time of year, but sounds like there are many more in the main season. Moorings 700xpf but they charged us only 500xpf. – Nehenehe

**Sept. 2018:** The dive buoy mentioned by Soggy Paws is long gone, Gaston cannot get anything to hold permanently on the outside. – Moana

**Sept. 2016:** Much has been written about Anse Amyot. A word of caution regarding the moorings. A neighbor dove his mooring and found it in shocking shape. 80% of the chain wrapped around the bommie was worn away. Of the 3 mooring he inspected 2 were in bad shape, one was good. He replaced the mooring he was on with new chain, shackle and 3 strand line provided by Gaston. Strongly suggest you dive your mooring to inspect it, and if you have any spare chain, shackles, or line, offer to fix your mooring up in exchange for mooring fees. – Jacaranda

**July 2013:** There are now 9 moorings. The price for mooring is still 500 CFP per day. Paying for a meal at the restaurant still covers the mooring fee (meals are 3000 CFP per person). However, Valentine doesn't have as much time to run the restaurant as she used to so if you come in for one or two days it's likely you will miss a chance at dinner and have to pay for the mooring.

Trading (giving Valentine some goods instead of payment), while not directly refused, is not appropriate. Because the Pearl Farm is no longer in operation the atoll is cash poor. Please be courteous and pay Valentine directly and promptly for the mooring.

We have had terrible weather this year. The wind has blown hard most days and has clocked from East to North to North West to West then back into the South and finally South East, never dropping below the teens. The other day even though the wind had blown with some force from the 'unprotected' direction for quite some time the wave action in the bay was pretty light. The entrance was rough, but the worst of the waves didn't seem to make it into the bay. Even so, when the forecast called for West and/or high wind, Valentine asked all the boats on moorings to put out an anchor off to the side of the mooring as a backup. – Nakia

**2010:** There are now 13 moorings here (we helped renew a couple and put in 3 more in 2010). Each mooring is 3/8-inch chain wrapped around a large (dead) coral head, with 3/4" line up to a floating buoy. Most buoys have a floating 'tag line' with a loop in the end. You need a sturdy 20-30' line from your boat ready to tie onto the loop. If all the moorings are full, there is room to anchor in 3-4 places. As always with moorings, it's a good idea to check yours out yourself.

The little lagoon has 350-degree protection—it is only open in a small slot to the NW. The only NW winds we had lasted 12 hours and were very light, so it was not a problem. Most strong winds during May/June are from a southerly quadrant, which is nicely protected by the very shallow coral reef inside the lagoon. – Soggy Paws

#### **4.17.2.2 West of the SouthEast Pass Otuigi**

**June 2021: 15°53.188S / 145°54.505W.** Dropped the hook in 5 meters of water with 3 floats. Nice sandy holding and great breeze between the motus. There are lots of bommies but they are deeper than they appear from the deck. We had an overcast day with some wind. So, even though we could see the bottom it was a little hard to gauge depth. Weather predicted W and NW winds which should be comfortable for this anchor spot. – Sugar Shack

**Sept. 2016:** We had mostly clear water as we headed SE in the lagoon but needed to keep an eye out for a few reefs along the way. We noticed the water much clearer than in Fakarava, being able to see depths in excess of 50' from the boat.

**15°58.916 S / 145 52.947 W** This motu was our favorite anchorage in normal trades E- ESE - SE 30' with bommies. This provides good protection but not as much as the wooded motus would further up in the SE corner. Still very nice and worth a visit.

We also stopped at a number of spots along the motus south of the pass. With good light it poses no issues with finding a clear patch to place your hook. Be prepared to float your chain. – Jacaranda

#### **4.17.2.3 South East Corner**

**Nov. 2021: 15°57.221S / 145°52.186W** dropped in 5 meters of water with a few scattered bommies around us. We stuck well and added 4 floats to our 40 meters of chain. We did travel along the coast from the pass to the corner looking for a fairly shallow spot to drop the hook that was not full of bommies and did not find any such anchorage.

Five new moorings have recently been installed in the SE corner. They have bright yellow floats with a 1" thick line and are rated for boats up to 18m. They were installed in early November 2021 and had no growth or barnacles – so new, new. – Sugar Shack

### **4.17.3 Yachtsmen Services**

#### **4.17.3.1 Fuel (Diesel / Gasoline)**

**Nov. 2020:** Fuel is no longer available in Toau as the supply ship no longer stops here. The locals would be very grateful if you brought extra fuel for them. – Sugar Shack

**July 2013:** Anse Amyot is not the poorly supplied remote location it once was. The Cobia 3 supply ship now comes in every 15 days and brings fuel (gasoline and diesel) and other supplies. Diesel can sometimes be purchased from the Cobia just like at Fakarava; however, it depends on what their schedule is. Bring your jugs and they have a metered pump which they will use to fill them. You pay up front for how many liters you want and take the receipt to the pump.

Gasoline can sometimes be purchased by the liter. It depends on if they have an open barrel available to dispense. They do not have a metered pump for gasoline. But if you have a marked jug, one that says 20 liters on it for instance, you can pay for 20 liters and have that jug filled.

If you absolutely have to have fuel and the Cobia is on too tight a schedule to sell you metered fuel, ask Gaston if he has an extra 200-liter barrel. You can easily buy diesel or gasoline in 200L quantities. It goes without saying that you cannot keep the barrel so you must be prepared to transfer the fuel to another container.

Gaston may, from time to time, have gasoline and diesel available to sell directly to cruisers. If you are in need and do not have time to wait for the Cobia you may be able to get small quantities of fuel from him.\* – Nakia

### **4.17.4 General Services**

#### **4.17.4.1 Wifi**

**June 2021:** Internet is available in Toau and Fakarava via a service called Varua Hotspot. You can pay using PayPal. Having an external antenna greatly improves your connection. This helps those cruisers who do not have GoogleFi or Vini connections.

**Varua Hotspot:** <https://hotspot.varua.net/en/internet-plan>

#### **Varua Hotspot Internet Plans for Fakarava and Toau**

- Unlimited data up to 1MB download, up to 512Kb/s upload 8,40€
- Unlimited data up to 3Mb/s download, up to 512Kb/s upload 16,80€
- Unlimited data up to 5Mb/s download, up to 1Mb/s upload 25,20€

We could not find the coverage area for Fakarava, but the coverage area for Toau is listed below.

#### **Varua Hotspot Internet Coverage in Toau**

- South of Otugi Pass -15.930778, -145.888796
- North of Otugi Pass -15.910546, -145.898656
- Maragai Old Village – 15.867805, - 145.931728
- Anse Amyot – Matariva -15.802479, -146.152291



**Nov. 2020:** Vini seems to work here (as well as GooleFi). The Vini wifi antennae is solar powered. Its peak operating time is at noon and it slowly dies down at dusk. Seems to work better when our Vini box was raised up the mast. – Sugar Shack

**Sept. 2016:** There is a cell tower midway between the Otuigi pass and Anse Amyot that was working when we were here and we were able to connect with our data card to get limited wifi. Plus, our cell phone worked most of the time in Taou. – Jacaranda

#### **4.17.5 Provisions**

**Nov. 2020:** Valentine and Gaston “may” sell you some fruits and vegetables from their garden. However, they use that food for their restaurant during peak season. The supply ship no longer comes to Toau so you cannot get provisions directly from there. – Sugar Shack

#### **4.17.6 Restaurants**

**Nov. 2020:** Valentine and Gaston open their restaurant from April – October. It is wise to make a reservation as they often fill up. If you arrive during off season, they “may” take a reservation for 6 or more people. They offer fish, lobster, and some meats (depending on season). – Sugar Shack

**Dec. 2018:** Gaston and Valentine don’t have the restaurant open in the low season. Very gracious. Lobsters were 3000xpf each. They asked for limes and we gave them some of ours. – Nehenehe

**2010:** There are really no facilities ashore except for Gaston and Valentine’s hospitality. Their restaurant is the focal point, in which they arrange dinners 2-3 times a week as boats come in. Valentine likes to do the dinners in small groups of 8-10 people. It is possible to press her to handle more, but the meal and the service will suffer. Unless you are lucky, do not expect to come into the anchorage late in the day unannounced and be able to eat dinner ashore that night. – Soggy Paws

#### **4.17.7 Activities**

##### **4.17.7.1 Diving and Snorkeling**

**June 2021:** We took the dinghy out through Passe Otugi and drift snorkeled in Passe Fakatahuna. The topography of the pass is really cool with deep channels and decent coral. We saw a large lemon shark, lots of parrot fish, star fish, napoleons and much more. Pretty snorkel and worth the effort. – Sugar Shack

**Nov. 2020:** This entire bay is fun to snorkel. However, our favorite spots are listed below. – Sugar Shack

The pass is great during an incoming tide where you can drift into the bay. We stayed close to the outer edges of the pass and found there to be lots of schools of fish. Black tip sharks, huge needle nose fish, and groupers. The water is crystal clear and warm (bath water). It was magnificent!

Reef at the end of the bay (bleeds over from the lagoon) has a huge variety of fish life and corals. We found eels, puffer fish, and lots of other fish around the various coral heads. You could spend days snorkeling here.

There is a Manta Ray Cleaning Station is just over the reef and inside the lagoon. If Gaston is not too busy, he might show you where it is. – Sugar Shack

**2010:** For divers with their own equipment and compressor, this is a paradise. The anchorage area is in the lee of an atoll with a beautiful wall that runs for a mile in either direction. Gaston has installed 2 dinghy mooring balls for divers, and it is also very easy to drift the wall with dinghy in tow with a 75’

'leash'. Our favorite dive spots are listed below. All these spots are along the wall just outside Anse Amyot. Diving is best in E to S winds.

- **Yellow Dog 15°47.468 146°08.698** Dive buoy with deep sand canyons 50m east of buoy. Best dive at Anse Amyot. Start at 9m and go over the wall.
- **Snapper Hole 15°47.608 146°08.832** A sand crevasse full of snappers. No buoy, but anchor your dinghy in 25-30 feet, or start here and do as a drift down the wall toward the SW.
- **Amyot Pass 15°48.040 146°09.360** Dive buoy just outside the pass in 10m, close to the wall. Dive the wall, or slow drift into the pass on incoming tide.
- **Caves and Grottos 15°48.674 15°48.806 15°48.938 146°09.906 146°10.066 146°10.206** This is a series of large grottos along the wall SW of the anchorage. Each one is very nice, and there's a lot of nice wall to explore in between. Possible to do as one long dive or a series of shorter dives. 20-40 feet deep in and around the grottoes, and the wall to as deep as you dare to go. If you only have time to do one spot, the middle one is the best.

For snorkelers, inside the reef close to the anchorage is a beautiful snorkeling area in 5-20' of crystal-clear water. (You need to wait until 2-3 hrs after low tide for the incoming tide to get the clearest water). In a 15-minute snorkel you will see hundreds of fish, large and small, moray eels, lion fish, if you look carefully, and only an occasional shark. If you are adventurous, drift snorkeling outside the reef is also very nice in 10-30 feet of water.

For safety when going outside the reef, we tried to always go in pairs, and always took a handheld VHF—this would not be the place to have a motor problem! It's a long drift to Papeete.

Also, when diving, be very very careful with your bottom time and ascent rates. It's a long way to a recompression chamber! – Soggy Paws

#### **4.17.8 Cruiser Reports**

**August 2022:** Morton Palmer lives approximately 3 miles north of the south passes at **15° 52.07'S 145° 55.69' W**. He raises chickens, pigs, bees, goats and sells eggs and honey. He is a super interesting guy who's working very hard to create a little oasis on Toau. Though he lived in Australia much of his life, he's a 4<sup>th</sup> generation Paumotan, the son of Robert Palmer who lives on Takarua. Anchoring near his place isn't the easiest – it is deep and has lots of bommies – but it is manageable. Or you can visit by dinghy from one of the other anchorages. – Migration

**Nov. 2020:** Gaston and Valentine at Anse Amyot are lovely and very welcoming. Valentine speaks English and is always eager to meet new people. They have a small church on their property and would welcome you to attend service with them. They have a very nice garden with tomatoes, papayas, mangos, avocados, peppers and more. If you have spare seeds to share, they would love it. Most of their garden is for personal use or for use in their restaurant. They no longer operate a pearl farm. They split their time between Fakarava and Toau so if they are not home please be respectful of their private property. – Sugar Shack

**July 2013:** Gaston and Valentine's pearl farm is now completely decommissioned. High taxes and limited time forced its closure. – Nakia

**2010:** There is no charge for the mooring if you come ashore for dinner with Valentine. In 2010, her Polynesia feast, which included lobster, poisson cru, several kinds of fish prepared different ways, and dessert, was 3000 CFP. If you opt not to eat ashore, the mooring charge is 500 CFP per night.

We came to Anse Amyot for 2-3 days and stayed over 2 weeks. This is our favorite place in the Tuamotus. There is a 'pension' (small guesthouse) on the island, run by Valentine's sister. There is limited cell phone coverage at Anse Amyot—Gaston stands on the roof and can reach the cell tower at Fakarava sometimes.

They collect rainwater in cisterns ashore and usually have enough to spare for passing cruisers in need (though when you need it most, they may also need it most!).

Gaston has a covered shed which can be used for dirty repair jobs out of the sun (outboard motors, etc). (Ask permission).

They are gracious hosts, and very generous in typical Polynesian fashion. But always remember that this is their home (the whole island), so ask permission before you do anything.

When things aren't too crazy with too many cruisers, and when ample gasoline is available, they offer trips into the lagoon to see their pearl farm, a motu with a beautiful pink sand beach, and maybe a swim with manta rays. (Late May and early June when the bulk of the cruisers are passing thru, they're too busy to do this).

Small gifts are always appreciated... wine, liquor, beef, coffee, and peanut butter seemed to be the most appreciated. Also, fruit from the Marquesas – Soggy Paws

#### **4.18 Niau (No Pass)**

##### **Guide Books:**

- South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 29
- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 76

#### **4.19 Takaroa (Pass, Village, ATM)**

##### **Guide Books:**

- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 64-66 South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 31
- Note: Charlies Charts says: No entry allowed to lagoon due to Pearl Farming. This is no longer true (2018)

##### **4.19.1 Pass**

**Takaroa has one pass called Passe Teauinae.**

**Nov 2023:** We used Manihi tide readings which seemed to be only 15 minutes off. The pass is nasty and the locals told us to enter with the current, and leave with the current. We did pass when there was no wind, with about 3 knots of current. It worked, but it is not for first timers. – SV Elvira Sweden

**July 2022:** After an easy sail from Fatu Hiva, we arrived in the early afternoon and waited outside the pass to assess the conditions. We asked a couple of passing fishing boats for reports on the current. One said we had to wait until 1700 but that would not be practical as we would have no light to cross the lagoon. After about 2 hours we asked another boat who said it was fine. (Remember that locals don't always consider that sailboats are not fast, maneuverable speedboats.) The incoming current accelerated as we approached the turn at the end of the pass. Still, with about 2-3 knots of current we negotiated the turn with little problem.

**NAVIGATION NOTE:** At the lagoon end of the pass, the navigation marker on the West side that is noted in CM93 and Navionics is no longer there. There is only a marker on the East side when entering the

lagoon. You can tie to the wharf in the pass if you don't want to enter the lagoon or are waiting for the current to change. Just make sure the supply ship is not due for arrival. – Migration

**June 2022:** We went through the pass at 12:00 local time 28 June, 1-1.5 hours after slack tide. It was not optimal, as the current was with us and against the wind. The wind was 20 knots from the SE, and with this as our first atoll we were a bit nervous. But we thought it looked pretty ok and just went for it. Our original plan was to stop at the dock by the pass, and wait until slack and an outgoing current at 16:00, but we didn't .

And it went completely fine. We have two powerful motors on the catamaran, and encountered 1 knot current with us. The strong winds were more of a problem than the current, but nothing too bad.

We had one person up front on each side of the cat to look for coral heads, but the chart was pretty good and we managed to maneuver within the lagoon without problem. We **anchored** in sand at 14° 27.671' S 145° 1.831' W. But there are coral around, and our visibility was not the best that day so we had to be extra careful when anchoring not to get stuck in coral heads, old fishing lines and not to break any coral. But the anchor was secure and didn't move after setting it.

We left in the morning at 6:00, had to leave early, but needed to wait for sunlight. The anchor spot is only 1 nm away from the passage, which was convenient when we had to leave early. We followed our gps track back to the passage and went through without big problems. Since Takaroa is not in the Guestimator, we looked at Manihi and Kauehi to make an estimate. We were a bit late, but since we had very light winds, and good motors we decided we could go for it again. We went through 30 min after slack according to Manihi, and 1.5 hours after according to Kauehi. We had 2 knots outgoing current. We felt it on the boat, but because of the twin engines, quite far apart, we didn't have big problems. But if we had had a monohull with one engine it would have been harder. – Cerebral Seabbatical (47' Catamaran)

**Jan.2021:** This was our first atoll in the Tuamotus so our approach was cautious. Having read about passes and rips and standing waves, we chose to tie up on the dock, which is in the pass on the north side. We spent the night there to be able to watch the tides and currents before going through the pass. The dock was in good shape with a rubber fender strip and solid bollards. This worked well for us for several reasons. We found the Mairie where Wifi is available during working hours and we met a local couple who recommended an anchor spot across the lagoon. We watched the water through the pass and got a sense of how it behaved. The pass has a 90-degree bend to navigate. The next day, locals gave us the thumbs up to leave the dock and enter the pass. For exiting we were still advised not to go with strong ebb tide because of the difficulty of making the turn and the potential of being swept over the reef on the south side. – Grace of Longstone

**July 2018:** We entered at 0600 apparently with the start of the ebb, and had about 2 knots of counter-current. Least depth at the bar was 5.5 meters. Very tricky narrow passage with current going all directions. – Dr. No

#### **4.19.2 Anchorages and Moorings**

##### **Please float your chain.**

Protect the coral and prevent future damage to marine life!

And save yourself the hassle of having to unwrap your chain. Simply use a fender or old pearl farm float.

**July 2022:** We crossed the atoll using OpenCPN and satellite charts and anchored near Robert & Maina's home at 14° 30.37'S 145° 01.58'W, 9m sand over hard bottom. Fair to good holding. You can go more to the WNW closer to the reef. Be aware of the karens. Reef provides good protection. – Migration

**Nov 2023.** We went all the way eastwards to **14°24.096' S 144°52.187' W** to get proper shelter for the coming east winds. It is marked with buoys, just stay close to them. The last NM is without markings, there is a lot of bommies, but Google maps shows them. There is unfortunately a lot of abandoned pearl buoys within the buoyed track. Many of them right under the surface. If you see a buoy on your starboard side, it might often be connected to a buoy on your port side. Our draft is only 1.35 meter, maybe 2 meter would be a problem. Only do this trip with sun and good visibility.

The anchoring is great and protected and large with great holding. We stayed for one week waiting for fair winds to Marquesas. There is absolutely nothing to do, other than relax, and we saw only very few people at this end of the atoll. – SV Elvira Sweden

**June 2022:** We anchored in sand at **14°27.671' S 145°01.831' W**. But there was coral around, and our visibility was not the best that day so we had to be extra careful when anchoring not to get stuck in coral heads, old fishing lines and not to break any coral. But the anchor was secure and didn't move after setting it. – Cerebral Seabbatical (47' Catamaran)

**Jan. 2021:** Pearl farming has ceased in the lagoon which meant a float free passage across the lagoon. (However, be aware that there may still be old gear floating beneath the surface.) All navigation marks were in place and vigilance for the odd bommies is required.

There is a small dock by the airport which is used by the local boats when a flight comes in. We were advised that you need to check with Le Mairie about using it. They don't want cruising boats to assume it is ok to just pitch up. It has a narrow entrance in the reef, but enough space to moore alongside in a shallow draft boat. We saw a monohulls in there and know a 36' catamaran had previously tied up there. The catamaran had kids onboard that played happily with the young family who lived next to the airport. – Grace of Longstone

**July 2018:** **14°27'.519S / 145°01'.440W**. We anchored as close inshore as possible (near the airport), to avoid the chop from the NE. Close by was a yacht sunk in 2017 (mast visible) because its anchor was not holding when the wind shifted to the east.

The new quay at the airport (called "marina" by the locals) is very well protected and would have been ideal; however, we found by hand-soundings from our dinghy a least depth of 2 meters (sand) which is not enough for Dr NO. The marina is only used for personnel transfers to the pearl farms, and a yacht would not have bothered anybody (to the contrary, expect children to come and play). The town quay, at the entrance of the passage, would have appeared a good alternative but we were told by the locals that there had been some serious problems with youngsters and alcohol, and that the town quay was not considered safe. – Dr. No

#### **4.19.3 General Services**

##### **4.19.3.1 Gendarmerie**

**Jan. 2021:** The gendarmerie is located in the main village behind the dock. The gendarmerie like you to check in with your passports and boat paperwork regardless of where you came from. – Grace of Longstone

##### **4.19.3.2 Le Mairie**

**Jan 2021:** Le Mairie is located in the main village behind the dock (on the north side of the pass). – Grace of Longstone

#### **4.19.3.3 Medical Center**

**Jan 2021:** The health center is located in the main village behind the dock (on the north side of the pass). – Grace of Longstone

#### **4.19.3.4 Bank/ATM**

**July 2022:** There is now an ATM at the Post Office – Migration

#### **4.19.3.5 Post Office (OPT)**

**Jan. 2021:** The post office is located in the main village behind the dock (on the north side of the pass). – Grace of Longstone

#### **4.19.3.6 Wifi**

**July 2018:** There is free internet at the town hall. 30' walk from airport, but every car will stop to pick you up – not that there are many. – Dr. No

#### **4.19.4 Provisions**

**Nov 2023.** As the other boats in the compendium, we also stopped at the jetty, to see if there was any food to buy. There is only one magasin available, the others seem to be closed. It has been some days since last supply ship so we only got 1 butter, 4 mango and 2 potatoes:-) There is no longer any vegetables available in here. The one previously on the road to airport is closed.

The village is very much run down, there is simply no reason to visit the village. Pearl farming has ceased to exist here and thereby also the major source of income for the people living here. It is sad to witness. – SV Elvira Sweden

**July 2022:** There is a small vegetable farm in the village. Ask around. – Migration

**Jan. 2021:** There is one tiny shop (which did sell bread but no fresh produce) about 200m behind the dock in the main village. There are also two more magasins on the road out of the village towards the airport. These two will slightly better stocked. – Grace of Longstone

#### **4.19.5 Cruiser Reports**

**July 2022:** We had a really great stay in Takaroa, mostly because we met Robert and Maina at the south anchorage in front of their house. Robert is 90 and was born on Takaroa. He has lived in many parts of the world and has many wonderful stories. Maina was a well-known Tahitian dancer and professional golfer. They are both delightful, speak English, and are very welcoming to cruisers. We so enjoyed our time with them. It is less than 3 miles by dinghy to town across the lagoon – (although it can be a wet ride). On a side note, Morton, who has a place north of the south pass in Toau, is Robert's son.

Takaroa used to be the atoll with the most pearl farms in all the Tuamotus. Environmental and commercial pressures on the lagoon caused nearly all the farms to fail. There are a lot of abandoned pearl farms on the motus around the lagoon making it a great place to get buoys for floating your chain.

Takaroa is mostly Mormon and has the first Mormon church in the South Pacific – from the 1800's. Everyone was very nice, partially due to us walking around with Robert and Maina who are adored there. There is a small vegetable farm in town but they didn't have much when we were there. – Migration

**Jan. 2021:** We had a really enjoyable experience staying on the dock for the night (at the N end of the pass). No problems at all. We didn't leave the boat unattended as we were advised not to by the gendarmerie, but we never felt threatened or uncomfortable. A family heard that we were there and

deliberately drove to meet us so their daughter could practice her English. Universally, all locals were friendly, said “hello.” We introduced ourselves to the Mayor and he said stay as long as you like.

Pearl farming has ceased in the lagoon as prices of pearls have dropped to a point where, we were told, it wasn't economically viable to run a profitable business. – Grace of Longstone

**July 2018:** We left from Ua Pou, Marquesas for Raroia, but it was close hauled and a bit too tough for the small kids. So, we eased the sheets a bit and aimed for Takaroa instead. We had no tidal info. We arrived on 14th July (national holiday) early morning. As it was new moon, the night was pitch black. The north coast of Takaroa appeared faintly on my radar screen from a distance of 4 NM.

We kept a distance of 2 NM from the (invisible) shore, well outside of the 1000m depth contour. There was about 0.6 knots of current in SW direction. We could see the lights of the village from about 3 NM distance. The unlit buoy “DCP” shown on Navionics, did not show on my radar. At 0400 we took the sails down just in front of the passage, to wait for dawn. The town hall was not able to provide tidal info.

All in all we recommend Takaroa as a stop-over, people very friendly, helpful and welcoming. Note: skipper proposed to his mermaid while at anchor in Takaroa. She said “yes” ! – Dr. No

## **4.20 Takapoto and Tikei (No Pass)**

### **Guide Books:**

- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 68-69

## **4.21 Kaukura (Pass, Village)**

### **Guide Books:**

- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 76-77

## **4.22 Apataki (Pass, Village, Boatyard)**

### **Guide Books:**

- South Pacific Anchorages: Warwick Clay, 2nd ed; page 31
- Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia: 2001, Pages 85 – 90
- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 76-79

### **4.22.1 Pass**

**There are two passes to enter Apataki.**

- **Passé Tehere** (Northwest pass) which is near the village.
- **Passé Pakaka** (Southwest) which is near Apataki Carenage Boat Yard.

See Cruiser Reports for passage to and from the SW pass to Apataki Carenage Boat Yard.

#### **4.22.1.1 Passé Pakaka – Southwest Pass (Near Apataki Carenage Boatyard)**

**Sept. 2019:** We approached the pass at first light and had a relatively easy entrance (slack tide). We were a little surprised by how narrow the pass was, but we had no problems. – Sugar Shack

**Dec. 2018:** The pass town has a good pier that looks easy to tie to and the small enclosed small boat basin appeared easy to enter and stern tie to a Wharf. We stayed away because of what we read in the 2017 guide, but in going by 30 feet away from the opening at Slack Water, we would not hesitate to enter it this time of year. There was plenty of space for us to stern tie the trimaran in late December. Wished we had stopped here. Both passes are very easy at slack water. – Nehenehe

**Sept. 2016:** We had 4 different sources for tides and all gave much different times for low water!! We used the tide for Arutua (atoll close by) which was for 11am. It had been windy SE 18-20 for about 4 days. We arrived at the entrance at 13:00 (2 hours after predicted low water) to find the pass flat calm but as we approached the dogleg the water became agitated and we saw 3 knots still flowing out.

We were told by numerous cruisers including a French charter boat captain who were very familiar with Apataki SW pass that it is best to enter on a flood tide regardless of the wind direction. This is contrary to the norm on other passes which we always tried to enter with tide and wind in the same direction. The pass is well marked with range markers and Port / Stb marks at the dogleg. Very straight forward. There was a boat tied to the quay as we entered. – Jacaranda

**2011:** We arrived at the southwest Pataka Pass of the Apataki atoll 2.5 hours after the slack tide noted by the Current Guestimator. Prior to arrival the winds were 10 knots or less from the east for at least 72 hours. There was a 2.5 knot current running out of the lagoon. There was a small amount of chop outside the pass.

We sailed through the pass about 1.5 hours after slack tide according to the Current Guestimator, with 12 knots of wind out of the east. The lagoon was ebbing and the current through the pass was over 4 knots, making our SOG over 10 knots. Four yachts were rafted at the village wharf and the largest wave in or near the pass was about a foot high. – Yolo

#### **4.22.1.2 Tehere Pass – NW Pass**

See Cruiser Reports for reports on passage to and from Pakaka Pass to Tehere Pass. And from Tehere to Apataki Carenage Boat Yard.

**Sept. 2018:** Diving/snorkeling...Drop in at the fish traps (or before) the South side of the pass and follow the ledge which starts shortly thereafter. – Moana

**Oct. 2016:** We reached Tehere Pass 15.00, and a high tide of .81m predicted for 03.54 that day. 1 nautical mile before the pass the wind and swell dropped considerably, and there was no chop whatsoever in the pass. The entrance was thus easy, with a 1.5 knots incoming current. – Asolare

**Sept. 2016:** We exited this pass on an ebb tide late afternoon (17:30) and had no issues. Outflowing current was about 3-4 knots and the wind 20+ from the E. Pass was calm. There is a fish trap on the east side of the pass. We used Irene's WP listed below and they were spot on. – Jacaranda

#### **4.22.2 Anchorages and Moorings**

**Please float your chain!** Protect the coral and prevent future damage to marine life!

And save yourself the hassle of having to unwrap your chain. Simply use fenders or old pearl farm floats.

##### **4.22.2.1 Near Village and Passe Pakaka**

**Sept. 2019: 15°33.872 S / 146°24.284 W.** We dropped the hook in 10-12 meters in sand/coral at North side of the Passe Pakaka. Floats are certainly needed. The South side of the pass has lots of pearl farms making it difficult to anchor. – Sugar Shack



**2011:** We observed two yachts tied up at the Hiutahi village concrete wharf in the pass when we motored on the south side of the pass. – Yolo

**2010: 15°33.941 S / 146°24.211 W.** We chose to anchor here after seeing S/V Prinz Karl (an Amel ketch out of Papeete) up anchor and move to the quay after we cleared the pass. The area south of the pass was well covered with pearl buoys and the area north of the pass is shown to be shallow on the chart. We took the dinghy and tied up at the E end of the concrete quay. For dinghy access to the village we anchored in 37', coral with some sand (took a little doing to raise anchor, but we were somewhat protected from the E chop)

We didn't do any further exploration of the village other than finding that the small anchorage basin described in Charlie's does exist. The entrance is marked by two black and white pillars W of the quay. The entrance is maybe 30' wide, the basin is about 10' deep and very small (with no room to swing). It may be possible to stern tie to the quay with an anchor off the bow. For adventurous or very small yachts only!

**15°33.780S / 146°15.343W.** We anchored in 24', clear sand, and ended up in 40'. There are small scattered coral heads in the 40' area. During a brief squall from the N we saw 17' as we swung closer to a sand bar off the reef. – Nakia

#### **4.22.2.2 Near Apataki Carenage Boatyard**

**Sept. 2019: 15°33.612 S / 146°14.907W.** We found a nice anchor spot near Apataki Carenage. Used floats, but not as many bommies as village anchorage. – Sugar Shack

**June 2017: 15°33.412S / 146°14.504W.** - sv Irene Tapio and Eeva

**June 2017: 15°23.040S / W146°12.295W.** Our favorite anchoring spot in NE Apataki. There is fine sand bottom at 10 m depth with few coral boulders. There is a submerged small coral head with appr. 2,5m water depth over it at 15°23.011 S / 146°12.189 W between the anchorage and APA07. – sv Irene Tapio and Eeva

**2010: 15°33.534S / 146°14.628W.** There are two mooring buoys but we are anchored in 24' behind Anteros (also anchored) – Nakia

#### **4.22.2.3 Other Anchorages**

**Oct. 2016: 15°18.6572S / 146°23.8207W.** On coral. This anchorage provided good protection despite the coral in N-NW winds that were still gusting up to 20 knots. – Asolare

**Sept. 2016: 15°22.994S / 146°12.0980W.** Anchorage between Pass and Pearl Farm: Pretty motu with mostly sand bottom 30'. Makes a nice stop to/from yard to N pass. Excellent shelter ( NE-E-SE) – Jacaranda

#### **4.22.3 Yachtsmen Services**

##### **4.22.3.1 Apataki Carenage Boatyard**

See Cruiser Reports for more details on the Apataki Carenage Boat Yard. Email them for up-to-date information.

- Location: **15.335S / 146.145W**
- + (689) 87 727 813 + (689) 87 716 139, [apatakicarenageservices@gmail.com](mailto:apatakicarenageservices@gmail.com) and [www.apatakicarenage.com](http://www.apatakicarenage.com)
- Contact: Tony (speaks English)

- Hours Mon-Fri: 0730-1130; 1330-1700
- Toilets, showers, drinkable water, washer machines, wifi, and general service

We understand there to be a rather shallow draft requirement to haul out here, but we are uncertain as to the limit. Please call ahead to ensure they can haul your boat base on width, draft, and weight.

**Sept. 2019:** We stopped in to see the boatyard and say hello to Tony. He said he was getting a new travel lift by the end of 2019. The yard was really clean, offered cooking gas, fuel, wifi, bathrooms, fresh veggie garden and eggs. He told us his goal was to provide the best service at the most reasonable price. For example, if you needed resin, he would only charge you for what was used not a brand-new bottle. – Sugar Shack

**Sept. 2016:** We didn't see any moorings but in good light the bommies are clearly visible in the anchorage outside the yard. Pauline at Apataki Carenage told me there's no live-aboard fee.

The operation includes:

- The haul out & Launch using hydraulic trailer
- High pressure wash
- Blocking the vessel
- 2 days of no charge parking (Haul out and launch days are not counted)

#### HANDLING

- Monohulls 1021 CFP TTC / Foot
- Catamarans 1214 CFP TTC / Foot
- Trimarans 1515-CFP TTC / Foot

#### PARKING DAY EXTRA IN EXCESS OF 5th DAY

- Monohulls 67 CFP / foot / day
- Multicoques 67 CFP / foot / day

#### Stationing on land long term (Wintering (Storage))

	Monohulls	Multihulls
1 Month	966 CFP / foot / month	1159 CFP / foot / month
3 Months	906 CFP / foot / month	1087 CFP / foot / month
6 Months	803 CFP / foot / month	1006 CFP / foot / month

Also, there are a couple of rooms for people to rent. Even though the website says there is a restaurant we asked about it and were told by Pauline there is none and no food is served

**Wifi:** Decent wifi (2G) available 500 per day or 2000 per week. We were able to get a good signal from the boat with the use of a wifi antenna. Not sure this comes with haul out since we were anchored out.

- Diesel = 156xpf liter
- Gasoline = 159xpf liter
- Cooking gas transfer is available

The supply ship Cobia comes weekly. The yard has some paint in stock and some supplies but you can order via the yard to load on the ship and they will pick up at the wharf. If urgent items are needed weekly flights can be used. They can also facilitate ordering of veggies and other items from Papeete.

A comment from Linda and myself - This seems like a well-run yard but a long trip for food to the village. Suggest you stock up on food before hauling out. Very limited selection of boat yard stuff (paints, etc). The yard is full of mosquitos. – Jacaranda

#### **4.22.3.2 Cooking Gas (Propane / Butane)**

**Sept. 2019:** Propane can be purchased at the Magasin Pahai (see provisions). Apataki Carenage can assist with cooking gas as well. – Sugar Shack

#### **4.22.3.3 Fuel (Diesel / Gasoline)**

**Sept. 2019:** Apataki Carenage may be able to sell you limited amounts of fuel. – Sugar Shack

**Sept. 2016:** Apataki Carenage can provide fuel as needed.

#### **4.22.3.4 Marine Supplies**

**Sept. 2019:** Marine Supplies: Apataki Carenage has limited supplies including paint. They state that they can do resin, epoxy, mechanics, paint, anti-fouling. Located off Motu Totoro (15.335S / 146.145W). I am sure Tony will work diligently to source any supplies you may need from Tahiti. – Sugar Shack

#### **4.22.3.5 Trash / Recycling**

**Sept. 2019:** Near the Niutahi village (cans, glass, & plastic) but they are small cans and were full. – Sugar Shack

#### **4.22.4 General Services**

##### **4.22.4.1 Medical**

**Sept. 2019:** There is a medical facility on the main road (paved) to the right of the quay. The doctor is in 2 weeks each month and the nurse will cover for him other times. – Sugar Shack

##### **4.22.4.2 Post (OPT)**

Poste is located at the quay near Niutahi village

##### **4.22.4.3 Wifi**

**2019:** Vini had 2G in Apataki. The Apataki Carenage Boat Yard has internet access for clients.

#### **4.22.5 Provisions**

**Magasin Pahai:** Hours: Mon-Fri: 0830-1130 and 1630-1830. From Quay, take main road (paved) turn right. Store will be on left hand side with Coke signage. They sell propane and provisions. Fresh goods are hard to come by unless you are here when the supply ship delivers. They carry oil, spark plugs, WD-40 and some other odds and ends. – Sugar Shack

**2010:** Walk S on the street at the W end of the quay one block and Magasin Pahai is marked with Coke signs. They were well stocked with the usual items. No baguettes that morning. The only vegetables we saw were onions and garlic even in the refrigerated cases, but we didn't ask for anything specific. They

had a display case of pearl jewelry with outrageous prices for what looked to me like inferior pearls. There is also a small hardware store attached to the magasin. – Nakia

#### 4.22.6 Cruiser Reports

**Dec. 2018:** There are people living at Rua Vahine and the house is now fairly large by island standards. The water was awesomely clear and good snorkeling with black tip and reef sharks, lots of fish. – Nehenehe

**June 2017:** Getting from Tehere Pass to Apataki Carenage: Below are the updated waypoints which I promised to send to confirm the way down to the Pearl Farm. The farm has removed a large number of buoys, and has installed new ones early 2017. The channel through the buoy fields is wider now and nearly in its original place where it was before the changes in June 2016. The only changed coordinates are those of APA03, which is in the middle of the channel at its narrowest point. APA04 has been added to avoid outermost buoys of a new buoy field 0.6 nm north of APA03. All waypoint names have been changed to form a more consistent set. The coordinates were downloaded directly from Open CPN to this message to avoid typing errors.

s/y Irene's waypoints from passe Tehere (north pass) to Apataki Carenage Updated 29.6.2017

ID	Latitude	Longitude	Comment
APA00	S15°33.412'	W146°14.504'	Apataki Carenage anchorage
APA01	S15°33.225'	W146°14.351'	Coral head on W side of route
APA02	S15°30.867'	W146°14.410'	Oyster buoy field on E side of route
APA03	S15°28.971'	W146°13.871'	Narrow channel btwn two oyster buoy fields
APA04	S15°27.651'	W146°13.801'	Oyster buoy field on W side of route
APA05	S15°26.835'	W146°13.847''	Sandbank on E side of route
APA06	S15°23.539'	W146°12.968'	Single buoy and sand bank on E side of route
APA07	S15°23.040'	W146°12.295'	See anchorage note below
APA08	S15°22.550'	W146°13.078'	Big coral head on SW side of route
APA09	S15°22.146'	W146°14.754'	Difficult to see small subm coral head N of route
APA10	S15°21.159'	W146°17.310'	Coral head S of route
APA11	S15°20.074'	W146°20.906'	Coral head S of route
APA12	S15°19.795'	W146°22.508'	Coral head N of route
APA13	S15°19,358'	W146°23.954'	Entrance to passe Tehere
APA14	S15°18.683'	W146°24.846'	Outside of passe Tehere

Notes: These waypoints leave a safe distance to all coral heads known to us along the route. The total length of the route is 24.0 nm.

There is a narrow channel between oyster buoy fields west and east of APA03. The field on the west side extends to the middle of the lagoon and the field on the east side goes very close to the shore. APA04 was added in June 2017 because two new oyster buoy fields have been installed further north on W side of APA04. This area is subject to changes in future as the route goes through an active oyster farm. Normally the farm leaves a channel close to the shore for local boat traffic. – sv Irene Tapio and Eeva

**Sept. 2016:** SW Pass to Apataki Carenage: Once past the dogleg on the inside of the pass there should be clear sailing to the boatyard. The three waypoints we saved are below. – Jacaranda

- Waypoint #1 abeam of the inside port hand mark. 15°34.113S / 146°24.343W. WP is approximately 60m S of the mark
- 2nd waypoint once you are inside the lagoon via the S pass: 15°34.477 S / 146°21.376 W
- Waypoint #3 in front of the boat yard: 15°33.523 S / 146°14.911 W

- Waypoints of two bommies. If you follow the above waypoints you will be way clear of both these bommies listed below.
  - Bommie #1 15°33.878 S / 146°19.042 W
  - Bommie #2 15°34.298 S / 146°17.668 W

**Oct. 2016:** We made for “Apataki 1” waypoint (as issued by s/v Irene and confirmed by s/v Jacaranda) and sailed to the Tehere Anchorage (about 1 NM away) anchoring on coral at 15°18.6572 S / 146°23.8207 W. This anchorage provided good protection despite the coral in N-NW winds that were still gusting up to 20 knots.

As the weather had turned to, for now, light S-SE winds predicted to strengthen, we decided to move across the atoll and followed the “Apataki way points numbers 1-5”, and continued to “Jacaranda Anchorage”, putting our anchor down in 7m on mostly sand at 15°23.0148 S / 146°12.0962 W. En route we steered clear of the exposed coral and reefs highlighted on our chart plotters and exposed bommies noted in the Tuamotu Compendium. We also spotted exposed coral reefs at 15°21.9966 S / 146°13.9551 W, and 15°22.9317 S / 146°12.7249 W. – Asolare

#### **4.22.6.1 Cruiser Reports – Apataki Carenage**

**Dec. 2015:** What Cruisers Can Expect at Apataki Carenage. These words about Apataki Carenage come from Deb and Gregg Burton in December, 2015: If the reader is not fluent in French (s)he may have some difficulty with the Carenage web page or an awkward translation so we offer these personal observations.

Kalliope and her crew had only the basic services of haul out and secure storage for 40 days. We carefully sought to know the cost in advance. A printed price list was provided and when we had questions they were answered clearly. Approaching the management this way was quite satisfactory and we feel the prices compare favorably with our previous two haul outs in north and Central America. We did not have the yard do fiberglass or paint work and cannot comment on costs for those services.

We have an easy entrance through Apataki south pass and crossing to the Carenage location. Anchoring in less than 30 feet, sand, near the Carenage ramp is easy and safe as long as you don't try to get in too close. This location is sheltered from trade winds. On shore we meet a young man who is one of the youngest of the three generations operating Apataki Carenage. Tony gives us a tour, answers our questions and responds professionally to our several concerns. He asks for passports, boat registration and a copy of the customs declaration document (equipment list) filed upon entering French Polynesia. Apparently, an occasional visit from the authorities is expected.

At the appointed time, we move through the coral heads, nudge the ramp and surrender our precious vessel to the crew of five who haul us out and pressure wash the hull. The hydraulic "chariot" is powered by a small yellow tractor. The crew carefully positions the pads and dives and nudges until they are satisfied, then the tractor pulls us up the concrete and steel ramp to the wash station.

After 24 hours, we are moved to a long-term site, our 37' monohull is lowered onto blocks, propped up with ten adjustable steel posts set in the gravel and held down with six concrete blocks and web straps. Anyone who leaves their boat in the southern summer is encouraged to remove all canvas and carefully secure their dinghy. All boats have their masts up.

There is a new, clean, but unlighted shower and toilet facility and clear non-potable water is provided in a barrel at the boat. Internet access (fee) is provided at a very pleasant shelter a two-minute walk through the family compound from the boatyard. Drinking water is available in limited quantities from

a tap near this shelter. Eggs and frozen chicken are available at attractive prices. Trash disposal is provided and includes recycling glass and tin and aluminum cans.

Photos on the website do not do justice to the beauty of the place. Tamoro Motu where the family built their life and their business is wider than many atoll motus and the natural vegetation plus the mature growth of coco palms result in a secure feel to the yard where there is room for about fifty boats on a gravel pad.

The yard has a ready supply of small power tools in good condition and electric power as required. Their crew is ready and willing to remove old paint, apply new and do minor fiberglass repairs. The boat owner is also welcome to do any of this work herself. Assistance is available to bring in any parts or materials needed, but be prepared to wait at least a week.

As a matter of fact, this is such a pleasant place, we suggest you plan a week of "free time" to take dinghy excursions, walks on beaches and trails, explore the tide pools on the ocean side and snorkel in the lagoon and back bay. At this time there is no ciguatera at Apataki atoll. There will probably be opportunities to visit with the family operating the Carenage and with other cruisers.

If you fly out of Apataki, one of the crew will take you across the lagoon to the airport in the launch and pick you up on your return. There is a plane once a week on Friday. There are rumors of flight schedule irregularities but no cruiser we met was inconvenienced. A passenger carrying supply boat is another option to get to Tahiti. – Kalliope

**2011:** Once inside the lagoon we set a way-point at 15°34.123 S / 146°24.311 W and then headed east to the Totoro motu at waypoint 15°33.384 S / 146°14.641 W. We used eye-ball navigation while inside the lagoon since we did not have charts covering this area. The waters between these two way-points were usually 100+ feet deep and we observed only one reef near 15.33.926 S / 146.19.132 W. A local had marked the reef with a large vertical tree branch, which will probably disappear with the next storm. Just prior to this reef we had to zig and zag around several pearl farm floats.

When we reach the Totoro way-point we were greeted by Tony from Apataki Carenage Services ([www.apatakcarenage.com](http://www.apatakcarenage.com)). Tony was in his dinghy and pulled alongside YOLO. He gave us a warm welcome, pointed out the numerous nearby pearl farm buoys and surface level coral heads. Most of the coral heads were marked with a steel re-bar rod sticking out of them. Tony invited us to use one of the four free moorings located nearby. He even assisted in securing our two bow lines to the mooring.

Alfred and Pauline manage the Carenage and offer many potential goods and services. While we were there in early June it was too early in the season for fruits, too late in the season for veggies, lunch and dinner service were available, baguettes could be ordered from the village, and fresh eggs from the 200+ chickens on the property could be purchased. They also have several other side-businesses such as jewelry making, pearl farming, and fishing. We didn't purchase a meal, however a yachtie on the mooring next to us described his dinner as, "Expensive, and so-so in terms of a meal." Chicken and rice was the meal-of-the-day. Eggs cost 65 cents (USD) per egg, the same price observed at several atoll stores. – Yolo

**2010:** Village: We didn't do any further exploration of the village other than finding that the small anchorage basin described in Charlie's does exist. The entrance is marked by two black and white pillars W of the quay. The entrance is maybe 30' wide, the basin is about 10' deep and very small (with no room to swing). It may be possible to stern tie to the quay with an anchor off the bow. For adventurous or very small yachts only. We then made the nine nm trip to the E side of the atoll. The passage is mostly clear with one reef at approximately: Reef: 15°33.926'S 146°19.132'W

There is a tree branch sticking up at the S end of the reef. We also saw a few sets of pearl buoys along both sides of our track, but we didn't note their positions since we assume these change locations over time.

We were tired of motoring all day so we headed straight for the W end of the first big motu rather than continuing E to where four other boats were anchored (or maybe moored because I think I saw buoys with the binoculars; will have to confirm that for you). We think they're in front of the Carenage dock and we can see one mast and foresail in amongst the palm trees.

Carenage: The next morning we took the dinghy over to visit the Carenage. Of course, it's a bare bones yard but the few boats there look well secured for cyclone season. We met Tapio and Eva from S/V Irene (Finland) who are back for their second haulout over cyclone season as they return home to Finland. He was very pleased with the experience. We met with Alfred and his wife Pauline and told them we'd like to see their pearl jewelry (made by their son, Tony, who's studied at jeweler's school for two years in Papeete), and they encouraged us to move to their anchorage to be closer. So, this afternoon we joined Anteros I, Irene and another boat. The ramp here can only take boats which draw up to about two meters, and I'm sure that depends on the tides too.. –Nakia

**2010:** I just wanted to let you know that we've hooked up with our friends, Ed and Nila, on the catamaran Quixotic. They hauled out at Apataki to travel by camper van in New Zealand last season. They concur that the people are friendly and want to be very helpful BUT there were major issues over the final bill and it turned unfriendly very fast. A couple of the issues were:

- Thinking he would throw some extra business to the nice family, Ed hired Tony (Alfred's son) to assist him with some fiberglass work. That labor (which was very spotty and slow) ended up costing him \$50/hour! Ed didn't keep close track of Tony's hours and feels the bill was padded in that area.
- There is some sort of a price break for hauling out before a certain date, which Q planned to do. However, it was very windy on the appointed date and everyone agreed it would be best to wait a few days. Alfred assured them (but not in writing) that he would honor the special rate. Come the splash date, with the boat raised off the jack stands, and it was time to settle the bill. When Ed disputed some of the charges, Alfred refused to splash the boat until he was paid in full.

All of this was very disheartening because Ed and Nila truly enjoyed their stay in Apataki and had good relations with everyone up until it came time to pay the bill. They recommend getting everything in writing (even if you have to write it up yourself and have Alfred/Tony sign it) and keeping close track of every detail. They circumnavigated the atoll and thought it was lovely. Oh, and FYI, they found bottom paint cheaper to buy in French Polynesia than it would have been in NZ.

A couple of more data points for Apataki from Ed and Nila

- There is a \$40/day liveaboard fee even if you don't use their water or electricity.
- Quixotic reports that another cruiser installed a handle on the door to the outdoor bathroom, Q provided the TP and something from which to hang it, and there is no shower completed yet (we saw it still very much a work in progress).
- There are also no bungalows or anywhere to rent a room if you had guests or didn't want to live on the boat (the web site description is over zealous with what's actually available).
- They were charged \$30 to ride with the family on their periodic trips to town for provisions. The daughter in Papeete who handles orders for supplies charges \$50/hour for her services and this was not split between boats as Quixotic thought it would be when two or more boats were ordering from the same chandlery.

Bottom line again: get everything in writing, and maybe pay in advance to get the "in full" price locked in, to avoid any surprises on your return. – Quixotic – 2010 (as relayed by Nakia)

#### **4.23 Manihi (Pass, Village, Wifi)**

##### **Guide Books:**

- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 64-66
- South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 31
- The French Polynesia Dive Guide, pages 116-125

**May 2011:** Unlike all the other French Poly locations we have visited, we were surprised to find that the chart of Manihi is slightly off in the CMap (CM93 computer charts Dated May 2010) charts. Someone else reported the same issue with their Raymarine chart plotter with a 'brand new chip'. However, the Garmin Mapsource charts (2008) and a Furuno 2009 C-Map chip was accurate and had more detail than the CM93 Cmap/Maxsea charts. – Soggy Paws

##### **4.23.1 Pass**

**There is one pass near Paeua.**

**Feb. 2020:** The depth when entering the pass was accurately indicated in Navionics. The shallowest we saw was 7'2" or just over 2.5m. The strong currents there, just inside the pass, were more concerning. There are no moorings near the village as Navionics suggested. However, there was one mooring about 2 miles from town. The 1 mooring near town was in less than 1.8m of water and did not look to be in good shape. – Hanaha

**2011:** Waypoints entering the pass from Slipaway

Outside the pass	14°28.065 S / 146°04.014 W
Just inside the red and green marks at entrance	14°27.529 S / 146°03.668 W
About half way through	14°27.307 S / 146°03.511 W
At Cardinal Mark	14°27.217 S / 146°03.466 W

These waypoints are based on WGS-84 datum. We have a Furuno chartplotter with a C-Map chip (purchased in 2009), and it was very accurate for the pass.

When you reach the Cardinal Mark, you will turn to starboard to come to the anchorage. There is clear water on both sides of the Cardinal Mark, but it is best to leave it to starboard. Follow the green markers along the edge of the atoll to the anchorage about 1/2 mile southeast of the village. Keep the green markers to starboard as you head to the anchorage.

Tide info can be obtained by referencing the AHE tides in the "Tides & Currents" program that comes with Nobeltec, and we also have Ahe tide info on the CMap chip in our chartplotter. I assume you can also get tide info for Ahe through [www.shom.fr](http://www.shom.fr). Or you can use Rangiroa as a reference and add about an hour to get high/low at Manihi.

Per Xavier (a local), slack water in the pass normally occurs about one hour after high or low tide.

If you prefer to have someone lead you through the pass, "Fernando" will do so if he is available. You can hail "Fernando" on VHF 16. He works at the airport, so if there's a plane coming in at the same time, he might not be available. There is a charge for this service. His price list says 2500 XPF (about \$30 US) per boat to bring you through the pass and another 2500 to escort you to the anchorage. That price



may be negotiable. When we came in, we had three boats following one another through the pass. He came out, led us through the pass and then led us to the anchorage, and he charged each of us 2000 XPF. – Slipaway

#### **4.23.2 Anchorages and Moorings**

##### **Please float your chain.**

Protect the coral and prevent future damage to marine life!

And save yourself the hassle of having to unwrap your chain. Simply use a fender or old pearl farm float.

**2011:** Anchor points from Slipaway. Here are some waypoints that will keep you out of trouble:

- To Anchor 1: 14°27.401S / 146°03.382W
- To Anchor 2: 14°27.574S / 146°03.268W
- To Anchor 3: 14°27.770 S / 146°02.953W
- Anchorage: 14°27.89 S / 146°02.19 W

#### **4.23.3 Yachtsmen Services**

##### **4.23.3.1 Fuel (Diesel / Gasoline)**

**2010:** The Yachtsmen's Guide says fuel is available in small quantities, via jugs. Another cruiser reported having fuel in a 55-gallon drum delivered to the boat by Fernando. – Soggy Paws

##### **4.23.4 General Services**

**2010:** Fernando is the 'go to' guy in Manihi. He and his wife own the bakery on the waterfront, with a small café adjacent. He speaks reasonably good English, and has a long list of services (for pay) that he offers to the visiting yachtsmen. But in addition to his business side, he genuinely wants everyone who visits to have a great time. – Soggy Paws

##### **4.23.4.1 Medical**

A small medical clinic is open in the village. – Slapdash

##### **4.23.4.2 Post Office (OPT)**

There is a post office in the village – Slapdash

##### **4.23.4.3 Wifi**

**2010:** Internet (for pay) is available in the anchorage off the village in the SW corner of the atoll (see Slipaway anchor spot below). There is both Manaspot and WDG Hotspot. – Soggy Paws

##### **4.23.5 Provisions and Restaurants**

**Bakery:** Fernando is the 'go to' guy in Manihi. He and his wife own the bakery on the waterfront, with a small café adjacent. He speaks reasonably good English.

**Magasins:** There are two small magasins in the village – Slapdash

##### **4.23.6 Activities**

**2011:** We did drift snorkel through the pass several times on the incoming tide several times, and that was very good - clear water, healthy corals and good sea life. We saw several large eels, some lion fish,

a couple of flounder, and a couple of octopus, as well as some sharks and numerous other of the more common fishes.

**CAUTION:** One word of caution when snorkeling this pass. About 3/4 of the way through, there are some old fish pens. One needs to be careful not to get tangled up in those. These are typically old rusty re-bar and chicken wire, sometimes not visible or partially visible above the surface. There was an incident of that during our stay in Manihi, and fortunately, the folks involved were not injured. It would be a good idea to scout this out on your way out to snorkel, and make sure everyone in your party is watching for it. – Slip Away

#### **4.23.7 Cruiser Reports**

**2011:** Here is our take on Manihi. It is pretty here, but not the most beautiful atoll we have seen. The anchorage is deep (about 50 feet), the water in the anchorage is not very clear, and the snorkeling near the anchorage isn't great. We are still here, so have not yet tried to weigh anchor, but there is definitely coral on the bottom.

The real attraction at Manihi are the people. We can't say enough nice things about Fernando - it appears it is his goal that everyone who visits Manihi will have a good experience. He is a bundle of energy and always has a smile on his face. When we were here, Fernando had a family member visiting from Hawaii (a Hawaiian State Senator), and they were planning a family picnic at a blue lagoon at the eastern end of the atoll. At the time, there were 4 cruising boats (11 people) in the anchorage, and he invited us all to the picnic. Although he runs for-hire daytrips to the blue lagoon, he told us this was a "special" event, and we only paid for the fuel for the boats to take us there (about 15 miles away). It was a very "special" day - we snorkeled, fished, gathered coconuts and enjoyed a meal that was prepared from food gathered off the land and from the sea. There were five of Fernando's family members present, and after we ate, they brought out their ukeleles and guitars and played music and sang. It was most definitely a highlight of all our travels.

Fernando does run a business and offers numerous services to cruisers - trash pickup, baguette delivery, laundry, assistance with a stuck anchor, pearl farm tours and some other day trips. He has a price list for all of these services.

While at Manihi, we also met Xavier Michel, who runs the Sailmail station. He is a retired commander from the French Navy. In his last post, he was in charge of the French fleet throughout the entire Pacific. Xavier is happy to have folks visit him, and he will show you his sailmail operation, as well as give you a tour of the house he and his wife are building on their island. Xavier is also very friendly and charming, and we enjoyed a couple hours visiting with him. You can also hail Xavier on VHF 16. – Slipaway

#### **4.24 Arutua (No Pass)**

##### **Guide Books:**

- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 76-77

#### **4.25 Ahe (Pass, Village)**

##### **Guide Books:**

- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 65-65
- South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 31-32

- Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia: 2001, (Pages 62-64)

#### **4.25.1 Pass**

**There is one pass in Ahe called Pase Tiareroa.**

**July 2017:** The pass and inside the lagoon was well marked with buoys. – Consensus (72' Oyster)

**Sep 2016:** There is only one pass into the lagoon located on the NW side. Its deep and easily managed. We went thru mid-Ebb with 20-25 knots ESE blowing and had about 5 knots outflow. Some turbulence on the outside of the pass but could steer around it. The waypoints we used to get into the lagoon favors the N side of the pass:

- Outside the Pass: 14°27.1940 S / 146°22.0558 W
- Entrance to the Pass 14°27.3832 S / 146°21.6025 W
- Turn to Port (~ 90dM) 14°27.5567 S / 146°21.2455 W
- Turn to the Village 14°32.1498 S / 146°21.6086 W

Once inside we followed the marked ship channel to the village of Tenukupara. It is a wide channel marked with port & stb beacons.

There are two marked channels in Ahe. One runs from the Pass to the village. The second marked channel runs from the pass to the airport. Both are clear of obstructions. Heading to the village favor the eastern side of the channel appears to be better as pearl floats are starting to encroach on the western side of the channel.

Ahe appears to be the very heart of pearl country in the Tuamotus. Over 50 pearl farms in the lagoon. Ahe supplies much of the oysters to Arutua, Apataki, Tikehau, Rangarioa, etc. We asked dozens and dozens of people about the lagoon what they thought about us following close along the S side of the lagoon as we headed to the E end. EVERYONE said no head back to the pass and go up the marked channel to the airport before heading over. – Jacaranda

#### **4.25.2 Anchorages and Moorings**

**Please float your chain!** Protect the coral and prevent future damage to marine life!

And save yourself the hassle of having to unwrap your chain. Simply use fenders or old pearl farm floats.

**Oct 2023.** We were awaiting new batteries and anchored in the village of Ahe. We anchored 50 meters from the pier at **14°32.193'S 146°21.437'W**. It is a very protected area for winds and good holding. 10 meters depth, but some nasty boomies just around you. It's not possible to use more than 40 meter of chain. Only enter in good visibility. People are very nice and helpful, smiling and waving. They helped us load the batteries and also came by to say hi. – SV Elvira Sweden

**February 2021 - Kamoka:** The moorings at Kamoka still exist, though the level of maintenance is not as thorough (DIVE THE MOORING BEFORE LEAVING YOUR BOAT, or going to sleep!!!- this should be S.O.P. for cruising vessels anywhere, but especially on an unforgiving lee shore)

The moorings are not what most cruising vessel are typically used to. Lines and oyster buoys are attached to large coral heads that reach the surface of the lagoon, while the surrounding water is ~20 meters deep. It is not for the overtly cautious or faint-of-heart vessel owner. Many long-term voyaging sailors have enjoyed the benefits of the moorings and the hospitality of the farm, but often new cruisers are scared/nervous and decide not to stay at the farm.

The moorings are often occupied by visiting boats and/or long-term stay vessels (friends of the family). CONTACT PATRICK BEFORE MAKING YOUR APPROACH TO THE PEARL FARM to confirm if/when a mooring is open for use. The correct email address is [humbertpatrick@yahoo.fr](mailto:humbertpatrick@yahoo.fr)

DO NOT ANCHOR ANYWHERE NEAR THE FARM. The pearl oyster stations are extensive and cover most of the immediate area surrounding the farm. – Sea Dragon

**Aug. 2017:** Kamoka is located 1.5 miles South of Passe Tiareroa. There are 2 Tahiti-tie style moorings set up at the house which can accommodate vessels up to 55feet. The coral head & the house provide protection from wind & seas from NE→SE. Another mooring is set up at the farm's oyster grafting shack on a coral head almost 1/2 mile from shore...this mooring offers much privacy and the coral protects from wind/seas from NE→SE. Another mooring exists close to the Pearl house which is not protected by reef during normal trades, but is perfect in stormy conditions when the winds are from SW→NW.

We charge nothing for boats to stay on our moorings. We do not offer anything for sale besides our beautiful pearls. Contact [patrickhumbert@yahoo.fr](mailto:patrickhumbert@yahoo.fr) or +689 87 21 12 64

Keep to port when entering the pass, and begin to follow the marked channel towards the village until you reach the 2nd Red channel marker (14°29.188'S, 146°21.334'W). From the red marker you will see the grafting shack & the Pearl house to the West, & there is a mostly buoy-free channel going to Kamoka (keep south of the oyster shack when approaching the Pearl house) – Sea Dragon

**July 2017:** We found this atoll to be less visited by yachties recently. Lots of pearl long lines in the lagoon but these are well clear of the main channel.

Anchoring near the airport might be ok if the wind is suitable.

Anchorage at northern end is a pretty spot to be based. Anchoring inside the village basin may be ok for small boats but there are numerous shallow coral heads inside the basin, so we anchored outside of it between large bommies and were able to dig in ok – Consensus (72' Oyster)

**Sept. 2016: 14°32.2020S / 146°21.4229W.** We found a clear sandy patch in 30' of water to drop the hook. We buoyed our chain with 3 floats allowing our 100' of 3/8" chain to float over the bommies. BE CAREFUL in this area as there are a number of bommies coming close to the surface. Good bright sunlight helps with picking a spot to anchor.

Be sure you are anchored away from the wharf as two supply ships came in while we were here. One of them at night. Boats have reported they were asked to move as they were too close to the wharf. We were told that our anchored position presented no problems to the freighters.

The anchorage is a U-shaped area almost completely protected by exposed reef to the N & W and motu to the NE-S. What a nice change from other anchorages in the Tuamotus not having to be so concerned with wind shifts. Plus, it's very close to the village.

There is a stb and port marker that marks the opening or entrance to the main wharf area and anchorage. Give the port hand (Red) marker plenty of space as it does not sit right on the edge of the reef. Our turn point between the two marks was 14°32.2713 S / 146°21.5041 W.

We were one of seven boats (9-16) to stop in Ahe in 2016. 2015 had even less. Much different than before GPS as it used to get 40-50 boats a season. PreGPS saw most of the yachts traveling from the Marquesas to Tahiti taking the northern route Manihi-Ahe-Rangaroa-Tahiti. My sister and her husband stopped here in 1976 preGPS on their vintage Lapworth 36 Gambit! – Jacaranda

**Sep 2016: 14°26.927S / 146°13.319W.** Airport: Located in the NE part of the atoll. Floated the anchor chain with 4 floats. Luckily a week later the anchor came up without a chain wrap. We approached this area in good light with excellent GE charts. The water is not as clear as other atolls and you do need to keep a sharp lookout for both bommies and pearl floats. Because we could not see the bottom in 30'

we used our fish finder to try and find a sandy spot. After 30 minutes of driving around we realized that there probably aren't any spots big enough to swing at anchor. Plus, the bommies are more like pinnacles. – Jacaranda

### **4.25.3 Yachtsmen Services**

#### **4.25.3.1 Cooking Gas (Propane / Butane)**

**Sept. 2016:** Cooking gas is available at the small shop across from the post office about 50m up from the wharf. Arre is the owner. No deposit is required if you bring the French bottle back to him. Very convenient and close to the wharf. – Jacaranda

#### **4.25.3.2 Trash and Recycling**

**Oct 2023:** There is no garbage deposit, but there is some recycling at the jetty. – SV Elvira Sweden

**Sep 2016:** Recycle - up the street from the wharf next to the post office there are two small green structures. Plastic and bottles. Non-recycle- Up the street past the post office to the second cross street and turn left. Just around the corner is a raised platform. It is next to the first snack shop and phone booth. About 50m further than the recycle. – Jacaranda

### **4.25.4 General Services**

#### **4.25.4.1 Post Office (OPT)**

**July 2017:** There is a post office in the village which offers free internet for 30 minutes. – Consensus

#### **4.25.4.2 Wifi**

**July 2017:** Post office offers half hour of free wifi. – Consensus

### **4.25.5 Provisions**

**Oct 2023:** The Magasin is basically empty. Some meat in the freezer, eggs are available, but absolutely no veggies or fruits. – SV Elvira Sweden

**Sept. 2016:** There are a couple small stores close to the wharf that carry basic food stuffs. One had a couple of deep freezers with shrimp, chicken, steak, etc. We found fresh veggies from Tahiti at a snack shop.

Bread comes in via the ship and occasionally from Manihi. If coming by the ship its bag in groups of 25. Way too much for our needs. – Jacaranda

### **4.25.6 Restaurants**

**Oct 2023:** Snacks open once a week, and some guys make steaks and fries at their house for take away - twice a week - turn right at the phone booth. – SV Elvira Sweden

**July 2017:** You can arrange lunch at a family run pension near the airport with pickup from the anchorage at the south end of the atoll in their speed boat. – Consensus

**Sept. 2016:** The snack shop (there are two) is located up the main street from the wharf past the post office, turn right at the first street (at the phone booth) and it's about 100m on your left.

**Pension Raita** 14°27.1637S / 146°13.3116W Monitors channel VHF 11. Phone +689 87 22 14 80. Owned by Willy & Raina. It's a wonderful friendly place and welcomes yachties to stop in and have dinner (1-day notice). We are so glad Cocoperle never responded because we had 2 wonderful dinner at Pension

Raita. They speak excellent English and the food was delicious. They also offer fishing trips, visits to a pearl farm, etc.

**Cocoperle Lodge** - We heard excellent reports from friends on Domino who were here a few years ago. We were hoping for a anniversary dinner at the lodge. But we can now say they are not interested in having yachties visit. We emailed them via their website with no reply and called and spoke with them 3 times each time they promised they would call back. Never did hear from them. Oh well... – Jacaranda

#### **4.25.7 Activities**

##### **4.25.7.1 Diving and Snorkeling**

**July 2017:** Good snorkeling on the lagoon bommies. We saw a seahorse, sharks, healthy coral, many colorful giant clams, and pearl oysters. – Consensus

**2011:** Today we headed back across the lagoon to the pass in our dinghy. We each did two drift snorkels through the pass on the incoming tide. While one of us snorkeled, the other hovered nearby in the dinghy to pull the swimmer out before we reached the turbulence caused by the current hitting the wind chop at that inside of the pass. It was really cool. We moved though the pass at about 5 knots. It felt like we were flying over the seabed below. The water was crystal clear - like gin. The coral growth was really healthy and colorful. There were lots of pretty fish. And we saw barracuda, nurse sharks and a black tipped reef shark. – Mata'irea

##### **4.25.8 Cruiser Reports**

**Oct 2023:** We visited Kamoka pearl farm and had a very lovely afternoon, talked to Patrick who has an interesting story to tell. We also bought a few pearls. Highly recommended. We did not use the mooring in front of Kamoka as there was too much wind and for that reason we preferred the anchorage in front of the village. Instead we were picked up by Patrick's friend Temarii (phone: 87396883) and he also dropped us off at the boat again. Temarii does not speak English and our French is not very good. However, we managed with Google Translate.

Temarii picked us up the next day also and took us to visit Motu Manu. The only motu with some remaining primary forest in Ahe and one of only few forests in all of the Tuamotus. It is an interesting place to visit to see the difference between a "real" forest and a monoculture of only coconut palm trees. The locals go there to collect soil in which they grow vegetables. Highly recommended. There is a picnic area with a view of the lovely lagoon. Looked like an amazing place to anchor the boat in front of Motu Manu. Unfortunately, we had too little time, or we would have moved the boat. – SV Elvira Sweden

**Aug. 2017:** We're writing from Kamoka Pearl Farm, Ahe, Tuamotus to let the cruising community know about the unique set up & services available to cruisers who visit the atoll. The pearl farm is owned & operated by Patrick Humbert, who sailed to Ahe with his family in the early 1970's. The atoll & its people made an impact on his life & he returned in 1990 to start Kamoka Pearl Farm.

The heart of Kamoka- the Pearl house- is situated atop a large coral head about 300 yards from shore. Most of the oyster & pearl work happens here, & more importantly- the daily family style feast. Though still a working pearl farm, the pearl industry has slowed down, & Patrick has put out the welcome mat to help keep the farm afloat. There is also a small magasin run by Rosaline at the motu next door- she sells basic groceries & Hinanos! Anyone wanting a unique experience in the Tuamotus should visit Kamoka – Sea Dragon

**July 2017:** Cute little walk around the village, very small store, post office with free half hour of wifi, and friendly locals. We tried to visit a pearl shop in the village, white house on the water with red trim, but

no one was around at the time. It is an easy village dock to tie tender up to. Time the pass with the tide so the current isn't too strong, but it is very well marked and easy to navigate. – Consensus

**Sept. 2016:** Ahe appears to be the very heart of pearl country in the Tuamotus. Over 50 pearl farms in the lagoon. Ahe supplies much of the oysters to Arutua, Apataki, Tikehau, Rangarioa, etc.

Linda discovered some information about a motu (Motu Manu) that has been **designated as a reserve containing the last stand of old growth forest in Tuamotus!** Many of the atolls were heavily forested before the coconut farms. A short dinghy ride from our anchorage we walked thru the forest which had large trees (12' + in diameter). Ferns, orchids and cleared walking trails made it a wonderful way to spend a enjoyable hour. Best enjoyed during the heat of the day or in the evening when the sea birds come back to roost. A short walk across this motu brings you to the outer reef with a sand beach and not much reef at this spot. Sea turtles use this area to lay their eggs. Pension Raita (14°26.3688 S / 146°13.4745 W) has a couple of small tables and chairs in this area which we took advantage of. – Jacaranda

## **4.26 Rangiroa (Pass, Village, Fuel, Wifi, ATM)**

### **Guide Books:**

- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 72-75 South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 32-33
- Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia 2001, pages 91-103
- The French Polynesia Dive Guide, pages 84-105

Rangiroa is 45 miles long and 15 miles wide, and is the largest Tuamotu, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest atoll in the world.

There is an anchoring tax, minimal (150xpf) that must be paid to the Gendarmerie. Please pay upon arrival.

### **4.26.1 Passes**

**There are two passes in Rangiroa.**

- **Tiputa Pass** (has anchorage cruisers favor), the Eastern Pass
- **Avatoru Pass**

#### **4.26.1.1 Passe Tiputa – Eastern Pass**

**May/June 2011:** We entered Rangiroa via the Tiputa pass. We used WX Tide 32 tables for Rangiroa - one of the local dive shops told us that's what they use, too. The currents really rip through the passes here, so it's best to try and time your entrance/exit close to slack. Conditions were fairly settled for our entrance (10-15 knots of wind from the east), and we came in about 10 minutes before the estimated high tide. We found a slight outgoing current (about 1 knot) and had no problems getting in.

Our last week in Rangiroa was quite windy, and per the local dive shop, the tides were only outflowing for several days. The Tiputa Pass faces northeast and is VERY UGLY with an outgoing current and strong E-NE winds. – Slipaway

**May 2011:** We did an overnight from Manihi and came in the Tiputa (eastern) pass at dawn, at slack current. Entry was easy even in that light—you could probably do it at night once you'd been there once. – Sea Flyer

#### **4.26.1.2 Avatoru Pass**

**Oct. 2016:** We entered Avatoru pass at 12h30 with NOAA high tide prediction of 3ft at 14h03pm, and found an incoming current of 3 knots. The pass is wide and the entry was easy. The following day it was low water and still in the pass at 14h00. – Asolare

**May 2011:** Although the winds had settled quite a bit by the time we departed, we chose to exit through the Avatoru pass because it faces just west of north. We departed 1 hour after the estimated low tide, and still had about 1 1/2 knots of outgoing current, but again, we had no problems with the exit. Be careful coming in the Avatoru pass on a strong incoming current. It may look OK from the outside, but on the inside, where the pass shallows, it can get really rough. – Slipaway

#### **4.26.2 Anchorages and Moorings**

**Please float your chain!** Protect the coral and prevent future damage to marine life!

And save yourself the hassle of having to unwrap your chain. Simply use fenders or old pearl farm floats.

##### **4.26.2.1 Anchorages near the East Pass – Tiputa**

**Sept. 2019:** There are 5 moorings which we heard were well maintained. But we anchored in 10 meters of water in front of the Kia Ora Resort. We wrapped our floating anchor chain around a coral head making this a “not so good spot” which is why I didn’t list the coordinates. The resort asked a few other boats to move because they anchored right in front of the resort blocking the view. – Sugar Shack

**July 2017:** We anchored to the north side of the pass near the dive shops. – Consensus (72’ Oyster)

**June 2011:** We spent the majority of our time anchored just inside the Tiputa pass, in front of the Kia Ora Resort. The resort is closed for renovation, and they are doing quite a bit of construction on the bungalows. This anchorage is comfortable in ENE to NE winds. If the wind is blowing from the east, a bit of swell starts to come in the anchorage making it a little roly, but it’s still OK. When the winds get anywhere south of east, the swell gets bigger and the anchorage can get quite roly - uncomfortable, but not unsafe. The anchorage is sand and scattered coral heads - closer in to the resort is more sand and better holding than the deeper areas.

**Dinghy Landing.** Dinghies can be landed at the concrete wharf on the western edge of the Tiputa pass, or they can be landed on the beach just west of the wharf and tied to a tree. When landing at the wharf, it helps to use a stern anchor to keep the dinghy from getting caught under the wharf. Also, make sure to leave room for the water taxis which come and go from here. If it’s a day when the supply ship is in, wharf traffic is very busy. Also, there are often children playing and swimming at the wharf, and they love using the dinghies as a platform for their frivolities. Consequently, we often landed on the beach between the anchorage and the wharf, tied the bow to a tree and dropped a stern anchor to keep the dinghy off the shoreline. – Slipaway

**May 2011: 14°58.03S / 147°38.13W.** This is just west of Tiputa pass in 30’ of clear water mostly sand and some low coral. It is a nice anchorage in the current conditions (light ENE wind), but directly on the path of local boats coming and going to work at ‘morning rush hour’. – Sea Fyer

##### **4.26.2.2 Blue Lagoon Anchorage**

**Sept. 2019:** We brought the big boat down here for a day spot. We had fairly calm weather but it was predicted to turn so we did not want to stay overnight. We took the dinghy into the lagoon and enjoyed a lovely day sitting in crystal clear, warm, shallow water as dozens of little sharks swam around us. There were several “tours” on shore eating and enjoying festivities as well. – Sugar Shack



**Oct. 2016: 15°05.657 S / 147°55.378 W.** Anchoring in mostly coral and some sand. The entrance to the Lagoon by dinghy is fairly obvious: follow the motor launches that bring 12-20 people to the lagoon each day from the hotels, (here by 10am, gone by 2pm). We spent the morning alone swimming in the Lagoon in perfect idyllic conditions. There are many baby black-tipped sharks in the lagoon, which, unfortunately, both inside the lagoon and outside on the reef, are fed by the local tour operators for the 'benefit' of their clients. Nevertheless, the Blue Lagoon is spectacular and well worth the effort getting there. – Asolare

**May/June 2011: 15°05.64S / 147°55.37W.** We had very settled weather for a few days, so we went down to the Blue Lagoon. It's a beautiful spot and highly recommended if you have the right weather conditions. The anchorage is open to the east, and even 10 knots of wind can make this anchorage pretty uncomfortable, but we were very lucky with good weather conditions. You can take a day tour to the Blue Lagoon. – Slipaway

#### **4.26.2.3 Avatoru Pass Anchorage**

**Oct. 2016: 14°57.0310S / 147°42.0170W.** We anchored outside Avatoru village in 22m of mostly sand. We are a bigger boat so were reasonably comfortable in 13 knots of wind in a S direction, although the anchorage is exposed to SE winds and a little pitchy.

To get to the little wharf in Avatoru village by dinghy, make sure to go around the South Buoy to the west and follow the well-marked short channel into the little harbour area. This area is exposed to strong current and choppy waters still affected by the current from the pass. – Asolare

#### **4.26.2.4 Motu Fama Anchorage**

**Sept. 2019: 15°14.092S / 147°42.445W.** (West end) Super beautiful, peaceful anchorage. Dinghy (during high tide) or SUP over the reef to enjoy the inner motus, lagoons and pools of spectacular waters. – Sugar Shack

**Oct. 2016:** Asolare's journey down the lagoon to the Motu Fama:

**15°04.876 S / 147°55.079 W.** Anchored in 15m of mostly sand and no coral in evidence, and had excellent holding in 12 knots of SE wind at 130 degrees magnetic. We spent the night, awaiting better visual navigation to get closer to the lagoon the next day. We had a fairly comfortable night, but as we're a bigger heavy displacement boat, we can withstand the pitching. The next day we continued on towards the Blue Lagoon

**15°01.607S / 147°52.071W.** Anchored in a calm anchorage with good hold and sandy bottom despite precipitation and rain, intending to take the dog leg down to the Island of Reefs the following day. The following day, the wind shifted during the day, although light, and as we wanted to head further South to the Island of Reefs, we decided to head back to the Freeway. Waking to cloudy skies we decided not to go off the Freeway to the Island of Reefs (17nm away) without good visual navigation, and made instead for Pomariorio Motu, coming off the Fairway for about 1 nm, and After a couple of days of R & R, we made our way to the Kia Ora Anchorage without mishap.

**15°00.308S / 147°53.363W.** Anchoring in 10m of water at on a fairly rocky but comfortable sea bed. Having left the Kia Ora Anchorage in the morning, we made our way to Motu Faama, traversing the atoll. We sailed the first 4 miles down the 'Fairway' to 15°02.1736 S / 147°39.2761 W, and then plotted a direct course towards the Western end of Motu Faama. We encountered a patch of shoaling, but never had less than 20m. From there we sailed to 15°04.37 S / 147°39.82 W and on to 15°07.30 S / 147°40.63 W without obstruction. At 15°08.6636 S / 147°41.0040 W there is a patch of exposed coral/rock about 5m in diameter and very shallow which would be very dangerous without good visual navigation.

At **15°11.1947 S / 147°41.6548 W** we found another shallow sand patch about 50m across which we avoided.

**15°14.0876S / 147°42.4115W.** Motu Fama. Anchored in 10m of sand. We made our way to a lovely anchorage on the West side of Motu Faama as we had a 12-15 knots E wind. The approach was straightforward as the shoaling water was gradual. The volcanic formations of the reef and the little islets are spectacular and well worth a visit.

**June 2011: 15°13.74S / 147°42.41W.** When we had strong southeast winds for a few days, we headed to the south side of the lagoon to try and find a more comfortable anchorage. We followed the navigation instructions in "Guide to Navigation & Tourism in French Polynesia" and sailed the dog-leg route to Motu Faama. This is a gorgeous spot. We found a good anchorage is at the east end of Motu Faama in sand and some coral heads. It was very comfortable in east and southeast winds, but when the wind backed to north of east, it got rolly.

**15°14.08S / 147°42.41W.** At the west end of Motu Faama (near way point), there is a lagoon, pink sand beaches and beautiful volcanic formations - well worth exploring, and we had it all to ourselves. When we sailed back to the Kia Ora anchorage, we sailed straight back to the anchorage, rather than take the dog-leg route recommended in the cruising guide, and we saw no obstructions.

The cruising guides also show an anchorage in front of the town of Avatoru. We anchored there for about an hour one day in very settled weather just to pick up some provisions. The anchorage was full of coral and very exposed - definitely not a place where we wanted to spend much time. – Slipaway

### **4.26.3 Yachtsmen Services**

#### **4.26.3.1 Fuel (Diesel / Gasoline)**

**Jan 2021:** There is gasoline for your dinghy available in Tiputa village (southeast of the Tiputa pass). After crossing the pass with your dinghy, continue past the village dock where the taxi stops, and go the "marina". Park somewhere in or near the marina, and walk to the left, then around to the right on the cement street, and turn left on the main road. There is a boat-works shop immediately on your left (across from the grocery store) that sells small quantities of gasoline. - Trance

**Sept. 2019:** We were told that several magasins in Avatoru sold diesel and gasoline, but we were not able to verify as we visited during their extended lunch hours. – Sugar Shack.

**2009** Yachtsmen's Guide says fuel is available in Avatoru in barrels of 100L or at the gas stations.

#### **4.26.3.2 Fresh Water**

It is possible to find fresh water in Rangiroa! You need to buy a card from the town hall in Avatoru and pay the desired number of liters (not very expensive).

For those without a desalinizer, this can really help. So we rented a car for half the day to haul the bins!"

#### **4.26.3.3 Trash and Recycling**

**Tiputa:** Recycling bins are located on the main street "verre=glass," "Cannete-Alu=Cans", "plastique=plastic"

**Avatoru:** A garbage disposal is at the pier labeled "Voiler"

#### **4.26.4 General Services**

##### **4.26.4.1 Air Tahiti**

Air Tahiti (located next to airport) Hours: Mon-Fri: 0730-1130 & 1330-1630; Sat 0800-1130

**Oct. 2016:** We were able to book flights at the Air Tahiti office in the village. – Asolare

##### **4.26.4.2 Bank / ATM**

There are 2 ATMS in Avatoru (village and airport) and 1 in Tiputa.

**Oct. 2016 – Avatoru:** The bank in the village does not dispense cash so we took a taxi (thankfully air-conditioned!) at 500 francs per person to the airport bank where there is an ATM. The price for the taxi does not seem to depend on distance, as we were happily taken to the secondary supermarket in the village (less well provisioned) before returning to the wharf. Phone Beline +689 87.21.00.30 for an excellent taxi! – Asolare

##### **4.26.4.3 Hardware Supplies**

Magasin TMT (Tiputa) +689 40 960 244. Offers basic tools and supplies (home building/repairs)

##### **4.26.4.4 Laundry**

**July 2023:** There is a lady named Lucy who does laundry. She did a great job and was very reliable. She will pick up and drop off at the wharf (probably anywhere). (Probably will delivery anywhere on island.) Her phone number is listed on a sign near the wharf. Also, her husband is a fisherman and will delivery vacuum packed mahi or tuna. – Nutmeg

**Sept. 2019:** We found two places that would do laundry.

Laverie Ohotu (Tiputa) +689 87 23 4491.

Jones Lavere (Tiputa) as you leave the wharf, it is on the left-hand side. – Sugar Shack

##### **4.26.4.5 Medical**

Medical Facility +689 40 96 73 96 located near airport between Tiputa and Avatoru

Pharmacy +689 40 93 12 35 (Avatoru)

##### **4.26.4.6 Post Office**

The Post office is located in Avatoru. +689 40 96 73 80. Hours: Mon-Thurs: 0700-1500 and Fri 0700-1400

##### **4.26.4.7 Transportation**

**Sept. 2019:** Taxi numbers and contacts:

- Taxi Beline +689 87 21 00 30
- Taxi +689 87 21 68 49 Raoul email [raoultauha.transport@yahoo.com](mailto:raoultauha.transport@yahoo.com)
- Rangi rent a car +689 87 32 74 48 or +689 87 27 14 22
- Rangiroa Rental Car (scooters, bikes, cars) +689 87 75 60 77

**Oct. 2016:** The price for the taxi does not seem to depend on distance, as we were happily taken to the secondary supermarket in the village (less well provisioned) before returning to the wharf. Phone Beline +689 87.21.00.30 for an excellent taxi! – Asolare

#### **4.26.4.8 Wifi**

**2019 verified (July 2017):** There was wifi available onshore at the two restaurants opposite each other near the dock. It was ok to tie your dinghy up inside the wharf area, the outside dock was used for a ferry and large boats refueling when we were there. – Consensus

**Oct. 2016:** We found wifi at Rangiroa Plange Pension some 300 meters south of the wharf Vini Spot/Mana Spot is not good in the village, even at the Post where the postmaster told us it was not adequate. – Asolare

**2010:** Iaroanet's website lists 'Tiputa Pass Anchorage' as a location for Iaroanet Wifi, located in the "6 Passengers Dive Center". Hotspot also lists Rangiroa in their ads. – Soggy Paws

#### **4.26.5 Provisions**

##### **TIPUTA**

- **Magasin T.M.T.** +689 40 96 02 44 has a decent selection of tools, home goods, frozen, canned and baguettes. Limited on fresh produce.
- **Ohutu et Magasin Tatie Henriette** +689 40 960 213 or +689 87 77 56 12 has a decent selection of home goods, clothing, canned, frozen, and baguettes. Also offers fresh baked goods in morning.

##### **AVATORU**

- **Rangiroa Market** +689 40 968 665. Hours: Mon-Sat 0600-1230 and 1430-1930; Sun: 0530-1230 & 1530-1930
- **Erul Magasin Maeva** +689 87 24 94 27 Hours: Mon-Sat: 0530-12 and 1430-1800; Sun: 0530-11h
- **Chez Daniel Magasin** +689 40 93 13 05. Decent selection of canned goods, frozen and basic staples.

##### **In Between the two villages**

- **SD Herlemme** +689 40 960 585. Decent selection of canned goods, frozen and basic staples.
- **Magasin Maeva** +689 87 24 94 27. Decent selection of canned goods, frozen and basic staples.

**July 2023:** We found Magasin Maeva to be the best with selection. We were surprised, and excited, to get asparagus and lettuce. You just need to be there just after a delivery. - Nutmeg

**Dec. 2018:** There were regular (2x week) deliveries of food stuffs and great vegetable selection for the Tuamotus. This is a good spot to reprovision. Very friendly folks in Avatoru. – Nehenehe

#### **4.26.6 Restaurants**

- **Chez Lili (Tiputa)** +689 87 324 250 (on right) decent wifi, good & reasonably priced food
- **Snack Puna Ohotu** +689 87 737 610 offers wifi
- **Pizzeria Moanatea** +689 87 264 914 Hours 1100-1400 and 1700-2200 (closed Tues.) Located behind Magasin T.M.T.
- **Chez Rua:** Best fish and chips! And a great view on a beach. Located in the middle between Avatoru and Tiputa so you have to figure out how to get there. We had a rental car. On the street side, there is a surfboard for the sign. - Nutmeg

**Oct. 2016:** There is a good snack opposite the wharf with reasonable prices and very generous portions! Rangiroa Plange offers a varied menu although we did not eat there. – Asolare

#### 4.26.7 Activities

There is a leaflet put out by Tourism Rangiroa with all services and phone numbers, which was extremely helpful to us. For all land line numbers insert 40 before the number and for all mobiles, insert 87.

##### 4.26.7.1 Diving / Snorkeling

###### Dive Shops

- There are lots of diving shops on the island. Only a few are listed here
- Rangiroa Diving Center +689 40 96 05 55, +689 87 29 06 18 [contact@rangiroadivingcenter.com](mailto:contact@rangiroadivingcenter.com)
- Top Dive Rangiroa +689 40 96 05 60
- Rangiroa Diving Center +689 40 96 05 55

###### Guidebooks:

The [French Polynesia Dive Guide](#), pages 84-105 list dive sites for Rangiroa. There is at least one dive shop in the town (which implies, hopefully, repair capability for dive gear, and tank refills).

The [Diving in Tahiti Guide](#) also lists 15 diving sites in Rangiroa

**July 2023:** We did 4 dives with Y AKA PLONGEE

They are a smaller company run by a husband and wife. They only take small groups out. We had maximum 8. They split us into 2 groups depending on skill level. Fabulous diving in the pass. Dolphins, manta rays. They made each dive a little different even though it is in the same area. Easy to dinghy to their location that is west of Hotel Kia Ora

+689 40 96 02 96

[yakaplongee@gmail.com](mailto:yakaplongee@gmail.com)

[www.yakaplongee.com](http://www.yakaplongee.com)

- Nutmeg

**June 2022:** Diving Tiputa pass is unmissable, because dolphins, as many have noted. Of all the pass dives we've done, we thought boat support was most necessary here; currents are wild and local knowledge makes a huge difference.

Aquarium was also a good dive; we saw pipefish, mating nudibranchs, sleeping sharks, and all the giant morays and big schools everyone else talked about. – Villa Veritas

**Nov. 2020:** I did 5 dives with Top Dive in the Tiputa Pass, 3 of the dives on the outside reef and 2 drift dives in the pass. I saw bottlenose dolphins on 3 of the dives and had the most amazing close encounter experience on 2 of the dives. By close I mean touching and playing with them. These are totally wild dolphins that choose to interact with you. A once in a lifetime experience.

We also went outside the pass in the dinghy on the ebb, in very calm, settled conditions and snorkeled with the dolphins and saw a huge shoal of barracuda...hundreds. – Ari B

**Dec. 2018:** Arnauld at Rangiroa Diving located immediately at the pier on the west side of the NE pass. Tehre is a fantastic operator to dive with the group sizes were ½ to a ¼ the size of Top Dive, and this results in very personal attention! We thought he was an excellent guide. – Nehenehe

**Sep 2018** - Drift dive through pass: Start at East outside wall, swim in. Stay along wall, when you cross two cables start ascending in the counter-eddy. Surface between red marker and pier. Be *\*very\** careful about 'ferries' which zoom between the two towns when surfacing.

Aquarium: Snorkel trail with educational buoys. Little current as long as you stay in the shallow. – Moana

**July 2017:** We entered in Tiputa pass and had a nice snorkel and shallow dive in the aquarium at the end of the pass inside the lagoon. Protected marine reserve and you can tell! Coral was in great shape and huge schools of snappers, sharks, and other reef fish.

There were quite a few dive shops and the average price was USD \$70 per person for a dive outside the lagoon with mantas and dolphins, and a dive through the pass. We didn't pay for a dive, but it was possible to drift snorkel the pass holding onto the tender. But with wind against tide in the pass, the waves really built up and there was a breaking swell in the pass, which was pretty sketchy! There were few large fish and broken up coral we saw in the pass snorkel, conditions weren't ideal when we went though. – Consensus

**May/June 2011:** We did three dives with "The Six Passenger Dive Shop", and we would highly recommend them. They seem to be one of the larger dive operations in Rangiroa and have a very nice facility. They are located about half-way between the Kia Ora anchorage and the airport - look for a reef extending out into the lagoon and a flag on shore. The proprietor of the shop, Freddy, is a really nice guy and runs a good operation. He likes cruisers and gives us the 10-dive discount even if you don't dive 10 times, plus an additional 10% discount if you have your own equipment (i.e., they provide only tanks and weights). The dives were outstanding - great fish life, dolphins on every dive, and lots of sharks on the pass dive.

Snorkeling is excellent at the "Aquarium," which is on the western edge of the reef inside the Tiputa pass. There are mooring buoys to tie up your dinghy, and there is no current here. The fish are used to being fed and will swarm around you if you bring bread, pancakes or some other food. – Slipaway

**2010:** We've had two dives with the Top Dive folks, and they've both been good. Not as good as Fakarava, and not as good as the snorkeling in Toau. But anytime we're in the water is a good time. We saw a huge sea turtle, a few sharks lurking in the deep, and slews of other colorful Polynesian fish. – Fly Aweigh

#### **4.26.7.2 Bicycles – Bike Rentals**

**July 2017:** You can rent bikes and bike the length of the island – Consensus

Bike Rentals (Tiputa)

- Kia Oro fancy resort only gives wifi to guests and lunch pricey. They will rent bikes too
- Ohutu et Magasin Tatie Henriette +689 40 960 213 or +689 87 77 56 12 rents bikes \$10/half day. Ride to end of Motu and avatoru pass where small town and shops.

Check Transportation as some car rental locations also rent bikes.

#### **4.26.7.3 Tours**

**Sept. 2019:** On our bike ride we came across a **Spa** +689 40 93 11 11 and a **winery Vin de Rangiroa** (winery) +689 87 79 07 45 in case you want to visit either place. – Sugar Shack

**May/June 2011: Pearls.** A number of folks went on a pearl farm tour with the Gaugin Pearl shop, and feedback was good. From what we heard, Gaugin sells good quality pearls and jewelry, but one could find some items that were not too expensive. As mentioned previously, a woman at the Para Dive Shop also sells pearl jewelry. It is less expensive and lower quality, but it may be just what you're looking for. – Slipaway

#### **4.26.8 Cruiser Reports**

**Dec. 2016:** There is a leaflet put out by Tourism Rangiroa with all services and phone numbers, which was extremely helpful to us. For all land line numbers insert 40 before the number and for all mobiles, insert 87 – Asolare

**July 2011: Anchoring Tax:** When we were in Rangiroa, we were approached by Gendarmerie by boat, requesting that we pay a tax. It was 150PF/night x number of people on the vessel. From what we gleaned; most cruisers are unaware of this tax. In the past, Gendarmerie assumed that cruisers would come to the Gendarmerie to pay the tax, but most cruisers are unaware of this requirement so now the Gendarmerie come to each vessel to collect. – New Morning

**June 2011: Anchoring Tax.** Once or twice a week (Wednesday and/or Thursday mornings when we were there), a local policeman and the tax collector come to the anchorage off the Kia Ora Resort to collect a tax - 150 XPF per person per day. If you are off the boat or anchored somewhere else in the lagoon, you may miss out on the opportunity to pay the tax. (Ed: This tax is reportedly being used to improve services for visiting yachts, including improving the dinghy dock area and adding showers.

The **airport** is just a couple of miles from the Kia Ora (Tiputa) anchorage, and in settled weather, one can tie the dinghy up at a concrete wall/wharf just in front of the airport to pick up guests. In higher winds/rougher seas, it's better to take a cab from the wharf at the Tiputa pass. – Slipaway

**May 2011:** There is a snack restaurant on the wharf on the western edge of the Tiputa pass, and a couple of pensions with restaurants (reservations required) within walking distance. There is a dive shop (Para Dive) just across from the wharf, and a woman who works there sells some pearl jewelry. There is a magasin (grocery store) a short walk from the wharf. The magasin sells baguettes, although one usually needs to order a day ahead of time, unless you get there very early in the morning. The magasin also rents bikes for 1000 XPF for a whole day, and 500 XPF for a half day.

Water taxis run between this wharf and the town of Tiputa on the east side of the pass (250 XPF/person each way), but unless it's really rough, it's easy enough to take your own dinghy, and there is also a wharf on that side where you can land a dinghy. – Slip Away

**2011:** Today the wind shifted, providing us with a good opportunity to head to the far end of the atoll. We started the 25-mile trip by commissioning our new autopilot - 9 months after leaving Newport. The water was pretty flat and the wind light. As we approached the south east tip of the lagoon, the water became much shallower and filled with coral heads and a few small white motus.

As we approached each coral bed, the water would slowly change from blue to aqua, then lime green just over the coral heads. I spent the last hour of the trip standing on the pulpit, one arm wrapped around the forestay, calling directions to Sten as he steered us around the coral. It is a beautiful anchorage. We're looking forward to spending the next few days here.

(Later) Our first morning anchored in the southeast corner of the lagoon I woke with a start. It took me a minute to figure out what had woken me up. Nothing. The boat wasn't rocking. The halyards weren't making any noise against the mast. The dinghy painter wasn't slapping on the water. My pre-coffee brain slowly absorbed these environmental clues and quickly shot back questions. Why weren't we moving? Why was it so quiet? Were we on shore? I stood up to stick my head out of the hatch over our bunk and look around. The water was a mirror. There was no wind. No wind means no wind chop in the water. No chop equals no movement. No movement equals no noise. It was the quietest moment we've had on board in months.

Based on our first two days here, during which the wind was light and the sun constant, I would encourage every cruiser coming through the Tuamotus to check out this anchorage. It is stunningly

beautiful. But if we hadn't had those two days before the high winds, clouds and squalls set in, I wouldn't recommend the spot.

But two days later, the weather turned, with the windward side of the reefs explored and our snorkeling options exhausted, we were both ready to move on. During the past few days we had seen several boats approach our anchorage and turn back, presumably deterred by the coral fields that we had navigated on our way in. With a break in the clouds around noon today, we upped anchor to motor to a motu off of which we had seen several of those boats anchor.

Unlike Apataki and Ahe, where the beaches were coral rubble, the beaches here are pink sand, giving the spot the name Les Sables Roses. – Mata'irea

## **4.27 Makatea (Moorings, Village)**

### **Guide Books:**

- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 70-71
- South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 33

There is no pass into Makatea as it is one of the most unusual atolls in French Polynesia with its 80-meter soaring cliffs. There are only a handful of moorings (3 in 2020) that enable cruisers to visit this beautiful atoll.

### **4.27.1 Anchorages and Moorings**

**March 2022:** There were 3 mooring balls available. One is directly off the pass into the basin, the second a little further south. The third, an orange float with an easy pickup vertical handle is further south still. Julien, the mayor, stated that the orange ball was installed by a charter company and they always have first right to it. However, he did say it was available for use with prior approval and as long as you are aware that you may have to move if the charter company comes.

All three moorings are in very deep water and feel way too close to the reef. However, it all seems to work just fine. There is a swell, even with very little wind, so we rotated around the mooring in random dizzying patterns. You do not want to be here with any west in the wind. We stayed several nights.

The commune has plans to install several more moorings for cruisers and charter boats. All of the moorings are on a first come first serve basis (except the orange charter mooring).

The basin takes some swell but is in great condition. We tied up on the same extended wall as the launch ramp, anchoring off to keep the dinghy from rubbing. – Grace of Longstone

**Nov 2020:** We contacted Julien in advance to secure a mooring, but bear in mind this does not always work as not all boats call ahead and can beat you to the mooring. We had settled conditions, so we ended up having to tie with a long line to the stern of a catamaran on a mooring. This was okay during the day but when the wind died at night our anchor alarm alerted us that we were getting dangerously close to the reef. – Ari B

**Oct. 2019:** There is no anchorage around this amazing and unique atoll which has cliffs that soar 80 meters into the sky. However, there are 3 moorings that are submerged 30-50 meters in the sea. Be aware that they moorings are very close to the reef which can be a little disconcerting. However, we pulled down 2000 RPMs with our 47' catamaran and felt confident. We also snorkeled and dove as far as we could and it looked in good shape. We took the one on the far left (NW side). Nobody else was



here when we arrived so we checked all three out. At the time, the center mooring had chafed lines, but I understand it has since been repaired.

It is wise to contact Le Maire, Julien Mai ahead of time to check on conditions and availability of moorings. We heard he may be willing to “reserve” a mooring, but I am not sure how he could do that. Contact: +689 87 744 522 or +689 87 757 735 or [Julien.mai@mail.pf](mailto:Julien.mai@mail.pf) or skype Julien.mai2 (contact given by Julien on 10/2019). There are plans to add more moorings and we were told that there were 5 in early November 2019.

**Dinghy Landing:** There is a small channel marked with red and green markers, into the old dock that you can enter. Watch the wave sets and time your entrance accordingly. It can be a “wild ride.” You will also need to use an anchor to secure your dinghy bow and stern as there is a lot of chop and swell that comes into this area. Be sure to leave extra room as the tide shifts dramatically from high to low. – Sugar Shack

**May 2018:** One can call in advance Julien at +689 87 74 45 22, the mayor of the 80 people village, to know about the sea condition of the landing area, the availability of the buoy (you may possibly reserve one) and set a time for a guided tour of the island including lunch, which we strongly suggest. It has no reef barrier and just three mooring buoys in a 50m deep area on the northwest coast, sheltered with predominant east winds— sv Maui (formerly Bulbo Matto)

#### **4.27.2 General Services**

##### **4.27.2.1 Post Office (OPT)**

**Oct. 2019:** There is a post office in main village. From the dock, take the one road up hill and follow it into the village. At the large cellular tower keep left. – Sugar Shack

##### **4.27.2.2 Wifi**

**March 2022:** Comms are pretty thin on the moorings but we got occasional what’s app messages on 2G. The post office has a Vini Spot which worked. Cards can be purchased from the post office or the larger of the two small shops. The commune hopes to have 4G here in the near future, taking a feed from Rangiroa. – Grace of Longstone

**Oct. 2019:** We found pretty good wifi connections at two places. The **Magasin Louela** offered decent wifi with purchase (they have ice cream)

There is pretty good wifi at Le Mairie’s home which we were invited to after we took the tour (see below). – Sugar Shack

##### **4.27.3 Provisions**

**Oct. 2019:** There are three magasins on the island. All are located in the main village. We only stopped at one and there were no signs with hours or contact information.

**Magasin Louela** (is located in the main village (dock, uphill, follow main road, located on left hand side with tables and chairs set out in their garden). It is a fairly small store, but they had a decent selection of canned goods, pasta, ice cream, and basic staples. The offer decent wifi. – Sugar Shack

##### **4.27.4 Activities**

**Nov 2020** – Bicycles were available to hire at Magasin Louela. – Ari B

**Oct. 2019:** This is a truly spectacular and unique island. At one point in the 60's, 3,000+ people mined phosphate (fertilizer) and then they all left to work nuclear testing on other atolls. All of the machinery was left behind and are part of the amazing tour Julien and his son provide (see tours below). – Sugar Shack

#### **4.27.4.1 Hikes and Walks**

You can hike and walk all over the island. There is only one main road and a few smaller roads so you can't get too terribly lost. From the dock, walk up the hill. At the top, turn right to see the old machinery area. Keep walking through the village and you will arrive at the old phosphate holes which are impressively deep.

#### **4.27.4.2 Rock Climbing:**

Julien's son offers rock climbing tours. In June 2019 a professional rock-climbing contest was held on the island. The majority of the equipment was left behind for the locals to use for tours. We were told the gear was installed professionally with glue and expanders. With 80-meter cliffs you can imagine how fantastic these tours can be.

**March 2022:** We came here to climb. In 2019 several routes were put and bolted up by a group of visiting overseas climbers. Julien's son can organize climbing if you're keen. Not sure of costs as we had our own kit, had downloaded the guide and sorted ourselves out. The bolts and lower offs were in great condition.

The island also has a Via Ferrata which we did independently. If you fancy something a little adventurous this may be for you. There is a series of recently installed wires and steps at height taking you on a journey around the cliffs. You'll be rewarded with fantastic views and maybe, who knows, some challenge and adrenaline. Booking through Julien's son, we saw a group provided with all the necessary safety equipment and I assume instruction. Sorry don't know the cost per head. Or the minimum age for kids. – Grace of Longstone

#### **4.27.4.3 Diving and Snorkeling**

We snorkeled around the mooring balls and reefs which were teeming with lots of sea life. The water clarity was amazing at about 15-20 meters. The swell and waves crashing on the neighboring reefs made me a little nervous, but overall a really great snorkel.

#### **4.27.4.4 Tours**

**March 2022:** We took the tour with Julien, same phone number as others have mentioned previously, for \$70 each which was both informative and enjoyable. He picked us up at 9.30am and dropped us back at 5.15pm. It was full day including a great late lunch. It's a good way to suss out the geography of the island plus experience the cave, (take swimming kit, an underwater torch and a snorkel and mask) learn about the amazing recent history of Makatea and see the stunning landscape. A complete contrast to the other Tuamoto atolls – limestone cliffs, dense vegetation, industrial history to name a few. – Grace of Longstone

**Oct. 2019:** Julien Mai, Le Maire, or his son will give a tour of the island for \$50/pp and will serve lunch a huge and tasty lunch at their home. They will show you the most beautiful spots, freshwater caves, viewpoints, the eastern beach, and the remains of the mining operation). You can reach Julien +689 87 74 45 22.

#### **4.27.5 Cruiser Reports**

**Nov 2020** – We did the tour with Julien and his son, and can highly recommend it. Julien speaks excellent English and is very knowledgeable as he was a boy when the mining was at its peak and remembers how the island once was. Take swimwear with you as it is possible to swim in the amazing freshwater, underground grottos through narrow interconnecting passages. It is also possible to climb up the rock face on the eastern beach. Julien’s wife provided us with a truly fantastic lunch back at their house including coconut crab and the best poisson cru we have ever eaten. They even offered us ice cold beer and wine. – Ari B

**Oct. 2019:** Makatea is one of our favorite stops. We arrived from Tetiaroa after a short, but lovely sail and were surprised to see that nobody was on any of the moorings. We were able to take our time in selecting the perfect mooring and get settled. We then spent the rest of the day snorkeling the mooring and watching the waves to get into the dock area. The first day we explored on our own. We immediately were intrigued by all the history and determined the tour was an absolute must. What we didn’t know was how spectacular the tour would be. Julien is super friendly and very progressive. He will tell you about the history of the island, the phosphate mining, and his dreams for bringing Makatea into future with more solar, tourism and self-sustainability. On the tour you will also see before and after photos of the dock and island, visit the beach with caves, and swim in a fresh-water pool inside a cave (with stalagmites and stalactites). Bring a snorkel, underwater camera, flashlight and towel. After the tour, you go back to Le Mairie for lunch where he served coconut crab, poisson cru, meat stew, rice, veggies, and an ice-cold beer! – Sugar Shack

**May 2018:** On our route from Tahiti to Tikehau we made a very pleasant stop at the island of MAKATEA. The island is about 135 miles north of Papeete and about 50 south of Tikeau. It has no reef barrier and just three mooring buoys in a 50m deep area on the northwest coast, sheltered with predominant east winds. No airport, really off the beaten track! The remains of concrete structures once devoted to ship loading of the phosphate minerals mined here in large quantities from 1906 to 1966 lay in front of the buoy. In between there is a landing cove sheltered at least in settled weather.

One can call in advance Julien at +689 87 74 4522, the mayor of the 80 people village, to know about the sea condition of the landing area, the availability of the buoy (you may possibly reserve one) and set a time for a guided tour of the island including lunch, which we strongly suggest.

In French or in a good English Julien and his son in law will show you the most beautiful spots of this tiny island (the view point, the eastern beach, the fresh water cave) along with the remains of the big hand-mining operation who bought here in those days 3000 workers and families. But also very remarkable is the lunch Julien offers in his house: good food, fish, beer, everything included in the tour for 5000 CPF! – sv Maui (formerly Bulbo Matto)

#### **4.28 Tikehau (Pass, Village, Fuel)**

##### **Guide Books:**

- Charlie’s Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 70-71 South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 33
- Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia 2001, pages 104-109
- The French Polynesia Dive Guide, pages 106-115

#### **4.28.1 Pass**

Tikehau has one pass called Tuheiava pass. The pass is 150 meters wide and 4 to 8 meters deep. Avoid entering during a Northwest wind. Stay to the center of the pass.

**Nov. 2021:** After a spectacular sail from Tahiti, we arrived at the Tikehau pass around 10am. We circled the pass for 1.5 hours because it looked menacing. Using the Rangiroa Avatoru pass calculations, we decided to enter at 11:15. Based on the calculations, we would be entering during an incoming tide with 2-3kts of current. That is exactly what we saw. The shallowest point we saw was 4.5 meters of depth. We had some chop, but it was manageable. I think it was a coincidence that the outcome was the same as indicated by the Rangiroa guestimator as you usually need to wait 1.5 hours after slack at Rangiroa before entering.

On our exit: 14 Nov. at 10:00am, 2kt outgoing current low tide, COG 302T, lowest depth 4.6m, based on Rangiroa stated 3.99 incoming not at all what we saw. Best thing to do is use your eyeballs and best judgement when entering Tikehau. – Sugar Shack

**Nov. 2020:** We calculated slack time by using the Rangiroa Avatoru pass. We heard you add 1-1.5 hours from Rangiroa's slack tide to enter Tikehau (which would be 0530 for slack tide at the Tikehau pass). We arrived at 0700am. After a quick visual we headed in and encountered 2kts of ingoing current. From the center to the end there is a current that pulls you toward starboard, but otherwise it was an easy pass.

On the exit, Rangiroa showed slack at 0800, we left at 0915 and it was perfect. – Sugar Shack

**Sept. 2019:** The pass is fairly large, but be careful when entering and ensure you are doing so at slack tide. We had two engines at 2,000 rpm with wind on the nose and made 3kts upon entering. We were also pulled toward the starboard. – Sugar Shack

**April 2019:** We arrived at the pass 2 hours before the Guestimator predicted high water slack tide for Avatoru, Rangiroa. We found the pass at Tikehau to be very near slack at this time with a very slight outflowing current. We noted a local fishing boat also arriving at this time to dive on the reef. After reaching the village we spoke with the local dive operator and were told that the currents for this pass are often unpredictable and they told us that they usually don't know what the current will be until they arrive at the pass and look at it! They seemed to indicate that the ebb is often stronger than the flood and that swell entering from the south often over washes into the atoll and greatly reduces the flood tide current.

We spent two mornings at the pass and on those days I would agree. We saw a strong outgoing ebb of at least 6kn (possibly as much as 8kn at the peak) but when it came time for the flood; we only saw a weakening of the outflow current. The winds were easterly at 6-10kn the first day and E 8-12 kn the second. Swell was estimated on the MATEO site at 1 to 1.5M from the south (with easterly component to the swell). – Nehenehe

**August 2018:** We came up from Mo'orea and arrived at midnight, so we came in close to the atoll to gain shelter and hung out till the morning. We calculated slack for 10am (using the Rangiroa tide point) and came in at 08:30 with no current. – Jacaranda

**Oct 2016:** We entered the pass at what we calculated was close to the end of the Ebb and had 1-2 knots outgoing and it was flat calm in a SE breeze of 15 knots. There are fish traps along the inside of the pass on both sides that present no problems. There are no markers in the pass but its straight forward. CM93 & OpenCPN charts along with INavx are accurate for the pass-passage to the village. – Jacaranda

**Oct 2016:** We entered Tuheiava Pass from Tahiti at 12 noon with NOAA low tide predictions for Rangiroa at 10 am. We had done our preparation and also observed the pass carefully before entering, but still encountered a strong inward current of approximately 5.5 knots taking us into the lagoon with

wind against current, giving substantial standing waves once we entered. We are 16.4m yacht with a displacement of 19 ton so for us it was manageable, but it may not have been so easy for smaller, lighter yachts.

**Oct. 2015:** - We exited Tuheiava Pass at 06h15 with low tide predicted by NOAA (Rangiroa) at 07h52 of - 0.3ft. We went through the pass on a strong 5.5 knot outgoing current. The pass was challenging, but safe. We chose to navigate straight down the middle, but sailing closer down the starboard side, however, we would have met fewer waves once through. – Asolare

**Sept. 2010:** The pass is bad. We entered 10 minutes before the direction of the flow changed & had 3 knots of ingoing current and very steep overfalls on the inside of the pass - they stretch right across the pass, & would swamp a dinghy. Slack is very brief, less than 10 minutes. We left 1 hour before low water, with 5 knots of outgoing current, & no overfalls on the outside, just some whirlpools, so you get turned a bit. – White Princess

#### **4.28.2 Anchorages and Moorings**

##### **Please float your chain.**

Protect the coral and prevent future damage to marine life!

And save yourself the hassle of having to unwrap your chain. Simply use a fender or old pearl farm float.

##### **4.28.2.1 Pass Anchorage**

**Nov. 2020: 15°00.349S / 148°16.355W.** Dropped in 6 meters of water in between bommies. We floated our chain with 5 pearl floats spread out down our 50 meters of chain. Nice spot, protected with a reef and easy access to the pass for snorkeling/diving. – Sugar Shack

**Oct 2016:** This anchorage is mostly sand with occasional bommies. There are two moorings with floating lines that are very long (beware when getting close to them that you should keep to windward of them). We anchored instead of picking up a mooring.

This anchorage looks like it is more protected than it really is. It offered decent shelter but in normal trades it can get a bit bumpy especially if the wind is S of E. – Jacaranda

**2010:** The anchorage by the pass is not as sheltered as appears on the chart. There is a large gap in the encircling reef that allows swell from the main lagoon to go straight in. The bottom is sand, very good holding, but you will pitch continually. If the winds are light it would be OK. – White Princess

##### **4.28.2.2 Village Anchorage**

**Sept. 2019:** We anchored between the marina and Tikehau Pearl Beach Resort in 12 meters with sandy bottom, good holding. Plenty of swing room. Avoid anchoring directly in front of Tikehau Pearl Beach Resort as they asked a few boats to move “that were blocking the path and view” to the resort.

We heard from several cruisers that the resort on Motu Aua discourages anchoring and will ask you to move if you anchor near the motu. – Sugar Shack

**April 2019:** We spent three nights anchored right off the pier. The first two were calm with a 6-10 kn easterly, the second was in a squally 20kn easterly and as expected, it is bumpy here at 20kn! – Nehenehe

**Sept. 2018: 15°06.8862S / 148°14.2587W.** We anchored just to the E of the Quay in sand 25-30' with widely scattered bommies. Be sure to give the quay plenty of space as the supply ship may need room to maneuver.

On the route from the Pass to the Village, we found a well-marked channel and we found no issues during this transit. We made this leg in good light. In winds E or N of E the village anchorage can be bumpy

**Jetty:** There was a French boat tied up on the inside (northwest side) of the long jetty and said it was very comfortable there except when the Tikehau Pearl Resort roared in and out. They did not have to move when the supply ships came in as they use the end of the wharf ("T"). Protected from the NE thru the SW

**Marina:** There is a small protected marina inside of the breakwater (for a few boats). One French cruising boat was tied to the new finger and a 60' power boat was side tied to the inside wall. It was very calm and protected in there and looked inviting. A local dive shop said there was no charge to tie up. – Jacaranda

#### **4.28.2.3 Garden of Eden Anchorage**

**Sept. 2019:** The Garden of Eden is located on Motu Ohina (known as Isle de Eden). Lots of anchoring along the Eastern side motus. Especially pleasant is in front of Motu Ohihi. This area was not rocky, very pleasant, calm, and quiet. Sandy bottom, 8-10 meters, but watch for bommies as you approach. – Sugar Shack

**Sept. 2018: 15°00.485 S / 14°03.491W.** Anchored in 12 feet of water, mostly sand with distantly scattered bommies. It was blowing 15-20kn easterly with 2' chop when we left the village, and flat calm when we got here. We pulled up to the dock, but the fellow who came out to greet us suggested we pull up to the beach.

We anchored about 1/3 - 1/2 mile north of the Garden of Eden in 35' all sand bottom behind the thickly wooded motu. It provided us a GREAT spot to sit out a strong Maramuu (25+ kts) and be protected from winds NNE to SSE. In addition, the motus knocked the strong SE wind down during the windiest part of the Maramuu. Easy dinghy ride to the Garden of Eden's dinghy dock. – Jacaranda

**Sept. 2016: 15°00.5630S 148°03.6070W.** Mostly sand bottom with occasional bommie. 32'. The anchorage is very calm and comfortable. You could easily move a bit further NE if we did not want to anchor close to the farm. We had winds in the 15-18kt range that moved from ESE to NE and the anchorage was very comfortable. – Jacaranda

#### **4.28.2.4 Pearl Beach Resort Tikehau Pearl Anchorage**

Warning. There are submerged power lines leading from Motu Tianoa (Pearl Beach Resort) running along the shore to Motu Haamea. Advised to anchor NE of Motu Tianoa to avoid dislodging the power line.

**Nov. 2021: 15°06.129S / 148°11.835W** Dropped the hook in 2.4 meters of water in a beautiful sandy patch. We immediately stuck, pulled back 2400rpm and had good holding. Super beautiful spot, albeit close to the resort. – Sugar Shack

**Nov. 2020: 15°06.11S / 148°11.856W.** Dropped in 7 meters of water with a sandy bottom. It is located between Motu Tianoa and Motu Runga. Super pretty, very breezy (we had winds out of the east) and comfortably fits 10-12 boats without being crowded. – Sugar Shack

**Sept. 2018: 15°06.1200S / 148°11.9000W** mostly sand with some bommies. A beautiful 4-star resort with a lovely location. But when we went ashore to try to book dinner for 4 people we were basically told to leave. Not interested in our business and would not allow us to buy a drink in the bar. Hmmm

maybe it's time we get haircuts and buy some new clothes.... Do you think? Anyway, we departed the next day for Garden of Eden

**15°05.8725S / 148°11.6943W. Anchorage slightly east of Pearl Resort:** The Village anchorage became bumpy so we moved NE about 2.5 miles further E and anchored in about 30-35' (sand and some bommies - we used a fish finder to find a large sandy spot) and found it protected from the SE-E-NE. It's only a few miles from the village, so it is easy to transit if the anchorage at the village gets bouncy. Holding is very good. No wind protection from the E-SE, but the reef does block the swell. Depending on trades, if water is spilling into the lagoon the water in this anchorage can be clear but if the wind is light then water is a bit murky. – Jacaranda

#### **4.28.2.5 Motu Puarua (Bird Island)**

**Oct 2016: 14°58.4252S / 148°05.9589W.** Motu Puarua. Anchored in sand 35' A small island that is heavily forested located in the middle of the lagoon that is the home of a number of species of nesting birds. Noddies, Fairy terns, Boobies, etc. We traveled from the Garden of Eden anchorage to Motu Puarua in a direct line.

**BEWARE:** There are a number of abandoned pearl farms that contain submerged pearl floats and lines. We safely passed over them as we could not see them until directly on top.

The anchorage was surprisingly calm and we could have easily spent the night. It was a shallow sandy area in the lee of the motu (wind was blowing 18 from the E - ENE). We hiked around the island and saw many birds nesting and young chicks. After a few hours we returned to Garden of Eden anchorage staying slightly west of our inbound track and still passed over a number of submerged pearl floats!! – Jacaranda

#### **4.28.2.6 Motu Tohuarei**

**Nov. 2020: 15°04.020S / 148°09.784W** Dropped the hook in 4 meters of sand in between a few bommies. This motu is in the middle of the lagoon and is only a good anchorage when there is very little wind and perfect conditions. – Sugar Shack

#### **4.28.2.7 Motu Mauu (Manta Island)**

**September 2018: 15°04.917S / 148°13.370W.** There is a Manta Ray 'cleaning station' Motu Mauu, which is an abandoned Pearl farm. Drop anchor 20m SW of stakes on the SW side of the motu (this is a day anchorage in settled SE to NE only). If you anchor further out, you may drop your hook into the abandoned pearl farm spidernet...Mantas will be in 1-5m depth on the SE side of the reef extending south from the motu. Approx 148°13.334W 15°04.951S. Don't scare them off!! – Moana

**Sep 2018:** If you are planning on anchoring on the WEST side of the motu be aware that there are numerous (we counted more than 10!) sunken pearl floats left over from the old pearl farm located. We were there when the water was very clear and we shocked to see how many sunken floats we saw. Most if not all of them are deeper than 10' below the surface but present a nightmare to anchored boats. Neighbors snorkeled the area and saw a spider web of lines held up by floats! As we were pulling our anchor up, we saw another float just inches from our anchor (whew!). We moved to the eastern side and anchored in 55' sand with a few bommies and NO sunken floats. – Jacaranda

### **4.28.3 Yachtsmen Services**

#### **4.28.3.1 Cooking Gas (Propane / Butane)**

Many of the magasin sell cooking gas bottles where they will do an exchange for an empty bottle or sell you a new bottle. They will not refill your bottle.

#### **4.28.3.2 Fuel (Diesel / Gasoline)**

**Sept. 2019:** Fuel can be purchased in small quantities from Boulangerie Henry Peter “the bakery” which is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> street. Hours: 0630h-12h and 13h-18h. Tel.: Phone is +689 40 96 22 46. – Sugar Shack.

**Aug/Sept. 2018:** Available at the bakery. Diesel was 180ff per liter (10-2016). – Jacaranda

#### **4.28.3.3 Marina**

**Aug/Sept. 2018:** According to the sign at the head of the dock there is now a 300xpf charge per meter per day to tie up on the marina dock. There were no cruising boats tied up there when we visited this time. Only a few local boats (small pangas). Not sure if there is a charge to tie up to main wharf. The marina is only big enough for a few boats and I would sound depth using a dinghy first before entering. Perfect for tying up your dinghy and loading groceries (for which there is no charge). – Jacaranda

#### **4.28.3.4 Trash and Recycling**

**Sept. 2019:** There are no facilities for cruiser trash & recycling. We asked a few locals about village dump and they stated that it was only for locals. Dispose of trash at another island with proper facilities. – Sugar Shack

**April 2019:** There were no public dumpsters or garbage cans anywhere in town. You need to walk out of town to the north and make a left at the Town Infirmary, walk down that dirt road about 700+ feet to the town dump where there are different pits dug for trash, steel, glass, and plastic. – Nehenehe

### **4.28.4 General Services**

#### **4.28.4.1 Le Mairie**

Le Mairie is located on the first street (closest to water) near the post office and police.

#### **4.28.4.2 Medical Center**

Health Ministry is located on 2<sup>nd</sup> street (right from port).

#### **4.28.4.3 Police / Gendarmerie**

The police / gendarmerie is located on the first street (closest to the water) near the post office and Le Mairie.

#### **4.28.4.4 Post Office (OPT)**

**Nov. 2020:** OPT +689 40 96 22 22. Hours: Mon, Wed, Fri: 0730-1130. Tues, Thur: 0730-0930. – Sugar Shack

**Sept. 2019:** The post office is located on the first street (from dock, turn right) on the right side. Hours: Mon, Wed, Fri: 0730h-0930h; Tues, Thurs: 0730h-1130h. Purchase a wifi card and use wifi anytime. Poste is only hotspot on the island. – Sugar Shack



**April 2019:** The post office is located on the road to the east. Office Hours: M,W,Fr; 7:30am- 9:30am and Tu, Thur; 7:30am-11:30am; not open in the afternoon. They offer wifi during business hours. – Nehenehe

#### **4.28.4.5 Wifi**

Only hotspot is the poste office. 100 hours for unlimited bandwidth was about \$130 U.S.

**April 2019:** The only internet that we could find was at the post office which closes early (M,W,Fr; 7:30am- 9:30am) on some days and (Tu, Thur; 7:30am-11:30am); not open in the afternoon. We could not find the WDG signal at any location in town. We saw an extremely weak WDG signal that an i-phone, i-Pad, MacAir, and IBM laptops could not connect to at anchor. – Nehenehe

**Sept. 2018:** No wifi at post office (ViniSpot not working) –Moana

**Sept. 2018:** There is decent WDG wifi broadcast in the village. If you have an external wifi antenna, we were able to connect at anchor off the village and even 12 miles away at the Garden of Eden. Prices continue to increase each year for WDG and it is one of the most expensive internet / wifi sites we have used. But it works ok. Our Vini hotspot router did not work here.

There is wifi at the post office. Also, we were able to get good ViniSpot connection on the boat with a good wifi antenna – Jacaranda

#### **4.28.5 Provisions**

The supply ship comes every Tuesday and ties to the T-head (as of November 2020).

**Nov. 2020:** Magasin Huri Henriette is the main magasin for Tikehay. Hours: Mon-Fri: 0700-1200 & 1430-1900. Sat. 0700-1200. Location, from main village, turn right.

Chez a Fou. Hours: Mon-Sat: 0600-1200 and 1430-1830. Sun: 0600-1030. Located past Magasin Huri Henriette. – Sugar Shack

**Bakery** “Boulangerie Henry Peter” is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> street. +689 40 96 22 46. Hours: 0630h-12h and 13h-18h. Order bread in the morning and pick up at 1600h. They are baking bread every day except Sunday.

**Magasin Tere** is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> street, past the bakery and toward the airport. Open 0600h-12h and 14h-19h. The magasin is closed during restock, but by on standby as they sell out of fresh goods fast.

**April 2019:** Magasin is located on the road to the west. Tere is now just one Magasin in town. The supply ship arrived the day we got there. They closed the store to stock the shelves and we entered just as they opened. We found the store to have less fresh food variety than some others in the Tuamotus, but still very good. (As an example; there is just one freezer stocked with three meats.... there was no Emmenthal, Brie, or solid un-grated cheese). The dry goods were well stocked and had good variety. – Nehenehe

**Sep 2018:** The supply ship Dyory arrives on Tuesday for a couple hours to discharge cargo. Usually by the afternoon the shop in town has their order sorted out and available. If you see the supply ship tied up and you need vegetables, be sure to go directly to the little store. We were there a few days ago when the supply ship was in and the store sold out of fresh veggies before the ship even departed!!

**Bakery:** The village has a bakery which bakes bread Monday - Wed and Friday-Saturday. Closed Thursday & Sunday. The bakery has bread available at 4pm (unlike most bakeries which open at 5-6am). You can preorder the day or morning before. – Jacaranda

#### **Garden of Eden – Fresh Produce Garden**

**April 2019:** Their sign at the dock showed hours of 8-11am and 2:30-4pm. They had Thai Basil, French Basil, Pak Choy, Lettuce, Spearmint, and some unusual greens for salad mixing. It looks like there will be several kinds of Brassicas, Cabbage, much more lettuce, cucumbers, and spinach in a month or so. Most of the beds had starts that were recently pricked out and only showing their first true leaves. – Nehenehe

**Sept. 2018:** Once again we visited this great spot for some fresh veggies and fresh eggs. They accept visitors M-F 8am-11am 2pm-5pm. On Sat & Sunday they are closed to visits.

The veggies and fruits are picked while you wait - Can't get much fresher than that! One of the guys that works there told us they are restarting the pearl farm. He said the pearl farm is marked by 4 yellow buoys marking the perimeter location. We looked with binoculars and could NOT see these yellow buoys but did see some pearl floats in that location. The location is towards the middle of the lagoon off the Eden motu. Just a FYI – Jacaranda

**2016:** If you thought that nothing grows in the Tuamotus, think again. Following the scientific principles established by a group of engineers (so much for science) and put in practice by an army of volunteers (so much for civilization), the "Prophet" from Taiwan has established a thriving biological farm.

Papaya, tomato, green beans, vanilla, even breadfruit and Acerola cherry grow in abundance. Pigs and chickens provide natural fertilizers. There is even a sea salt production shed that gives the best "fleur de sel" I've ever tasted. The pearl farm is closed, sunk by the diving price of Tahitian pearls. After an obligatory stop at the gift shop where we couldn't pass up on the sea salt, we left the Garden of Eden, loaded with fresh spinach! Sometimes, you can buy more fresh produce, depending on the season and production. – MV Domino

#### **4.28.6 Restaurants**

**Sept. 2019:** There are several tasty places to grab a bite to eat. – Sugar Shack

- **Snack Bar at harbor.** Only open for lunch 11h-14h, but food is good and reasonably priced. From port, turn left and walk along water. Just behind white building. with trinket store
- **Fred & Rowena Snack Shack** Located next to Medical Center (Health Ministry on 2<sup>nd</sup> street (right from port). Open 11h-1500hrs
- **Snack Ohina** on 2<sup>nd</sup> street (right of port) Open Mon-Sat: 11h-14h and 18h-21h
- **Snack Shack** near poste, police, community center. No hours posted
- **Snack Shack** on 2<sup>nd</sup> street (left from port) open 0730h-1500h
- **Snack Ohina** (café) is located on the road to the east.

**Sept. 2018:** Tikehau Village Resort - We walked down to the resort just opposite the airport for lunch after calling and making a reservation. They had a set menu which was reef fish. Since we don't eat reef fish, they served us chicken wings. Water, lunch and desert was 2500xpf each. Meal was fair. Nice setting overlooking the lagoon. Can easily bring dinghy into their beach. Dive boat uses this to pickup/drop off passengers.

There is another snack located to the right (west) of the marina that was recommended to us by a few locals. Located on the same street as the Post Office.

**Tikehau Pearl Resort:** We again tried to visit this resort calling ahead and mentioning we were scouting a resort for our sons upcoming honeymoon. Nope they said NOT to come and were not interested in any business from us!

**Ninamu Resort** run by an Aussie (Chris) located near the village (1.3 miles NW) on Motu Tavararo was most welcoming. He said we could anchor in front of his resort and schedule a dinner or come in and have a drink. Really nice guy and the place is fully booked out when we were there.

We had a good lunch at a place located about 400M N of the post office. It seemed to cater to the tourists in the village as it was full when we arrived. Good burgers and -Frites wer very good. – Jacaranda

#### **4.28.7 Activities**

##### **4.28.7.1 Tours**

**Nov. 2021:** There is a wonderful tour guide who is willing to show you the typical Tikehua tourist spots and the “not so typical spots.” His name is Matihau and he can be found on [Facebook](#). As reported by Bill Streep on Merlin. – Sugar Shack

##### **4.28.7.2 Diving and Snorkeling**

**Sept. 2019:** We snorkeled near Motu Mauu (the manta ray cleaning station) and found it to be lacking fish and pretty corals. We heard that Donnie on Moto Ohihi will take people spear fishing and lobster hunting, but we cannot verify. – Sugar Shack

**April 2019:** Of the ten dives we have done in the Tuamotus (Tikehau, Fakarava, Rangiroa), the two we did in Tikehau could be described as the least interesting of the group. I hesitate to have said the foregoing and only do so because of the comment in the Compendium about the diving being “really good diving”.

Unless Tikehau is your only chance to dive in the Tuamotus, we would recommend focusing on Fakarava south pass, or Rangiroa. We dove with Tikehau Plongee (Sebastien and Jean-Paul) and found them to be an excellent operator, we highly recommend them. The group size was also very small and we enjoy that. - Nehenehe

**Sept 2018:** The pass itself is not interesting for snorkeling or diving. – Moana

**Aug./Sept. 2018:** The snorkeling here is not good as the water is cloudy and not many fish on the bommies closer to the beach. The number of Hoa's are shallow and not able to snorkel them. There is a dive shop offering pass diving, Mantra Ray cleaning station trips etc. Located just up from the wharf at the intersection of the main road to the airport. – Jacaranda

##### **4.28.7.3 Hiking**

**Sept. 2019:** The entire atoll is flat and easily walked in a few hours. We walked almost all the way around in about 2.5 hours. Sometimes on streets, sometimes through yards and other times on the beach. – Sugar Shack

#### **4.28.8 Cruiser Reports**

**April 2019:** The locals were very friendly and offered unsolicited rides as we carried supplies back to our boat. It is a nice town with one snack shop near the end of town to the north. Everyone we spoke with was supper helpful and kind. There are two parallel North-South main roads in town about a block apart. The Post Office and Snack Ohina (Café) are on the road to the east and the Magasin is on the one to the west. – Nehenehe

### **4.29 Matahiva (No Anchorage Possible)**

#### **Guidebooks:**

- Charlie’s Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 70-71

### **4.30 Pukapuka (No Pass)**

#### **Guidebooks:**

- South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 25: This remote atoll lies east, roughly on the route from Gambier to Marquesas. It is a 2.4-mile diameter atoll that has a lagoon that is drying up. In fine weather it is possible to anchor on a coral shelf off the village at the west end of the atoll.

### **4.31 Tepoto (No Pass, Possible Anchorage in Settled Weather)**

#### **Guidebooks:**

- South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 24
- Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 96

#### **4.31.1 Cruiser Reports**

**Aug 2010:** We ended up passing the twin islands of Tepoto and Napuka, which are directly on the route between Raroia and Fatu Hiva, by sailing (on visual, during the daytime) close up to the SW corner of Tepoto, and sailing close around the western end. Interestingly, our Garmin Mapsource charts looked like they were more accurate than the CMap/Maxsea charts, but they ended up being off in position. According to the Garmin charts, we sailed right across the middle of Tepoto! Though our CMap chart only showed a 1000-meter depth curve for Tepoto, it seemed positionally more accurate. We did not turn on the radar, but the land seemed higher than most Tuamotu atolls, and so should give a pretty good radar return from at least a few miles out (at least the west end). – Soggy Paws

### **4.32 Napuka (No Pass)**

This island isn't listed in any cruising guide, but it is shown on the overview map of the Tuamotus in Charlie's Charts (on page 63). It is out by itself, near Pukapuka.

**2009:** Enroute from Makemo to Marquesas: We made a brief detour to the remote atolls of Takapoto (Tepoto) and Nepuka, but without passes and with very steep coral shelves, the anchoring was too dicey for us. These are known as the Îles Disappointment—they were for us, as well as for some of the locals who gathered on the wharf waiting for us to come ashore. At Napuka we were two boat lengths away from the breakers on the outer reef and still in over 100 feet of water. – Migrations

## **5 Moving on to the Marquesas, Societies, Gambier, or Australs Archipelagos?**

Download our Marquesas, Societies, and Gambier/Austral Compendia here:

<http://svsoggyaws.com/files/index.htm#frpoly>

**Note:** The French Weather Terms appendix has been moved to the French Polynesia Weather Compendium (now a separate document).