The Tuamotus Compendium

A Compilation of Guidebook References and Cruising Reports

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

Rev 2020.4 – 27 July, 2020

Please send us updates to this guide!

Keeping this useful cruising guide up to date is impossible for me all by myself… we have cruised another 20,000 miles downwind, through many other islands and countries (dribbling more Compendia behind us). I’m still happy to edit in updates, but you’re going to have to take a few minutes out of your busy cruising schedule and send me an email with a few updates to help keep the Tuamotus Compendium alive.

Email Soggy Paws at sherry –at- svsoggypaws –dot- com.
You can also contact us on Sailmail at WDI5677

The current home (and the most up to date) version of this document is:

http://svsoggypaws.com/files/#pacific
**Revision Log**

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

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I would like to extend a Huge Thanks to Christine Mitchell of s/v Sugar Shack  
For revamping this 10 year old Compendium in 2019/2020  
and  
Chuck Hoolihan of s/v Jacaranda for his unfailing dedication to cruisers’ information in French Polynesia
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1 Introduction

This guide originally started out in early 2010 as a way for s/v Soggy Paws and s/v Visions of Johanna to organize notes and various internet sources on the Tuamotus, prior to arrival. Later, it became a way for us to pass on what we’ve learned while cruising in the Tuamotus during 2010 and 2011. We have since created over 20 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!).

Rather than making this a web-based wiki-type cruiser’s guide, I wanted to make it fully downloadable, where a cruiser planning to cruise French Polynesia could download all the information in one document ahead of time. You don’t realize how much you rely on the internet these days for information, and when you are in the boonies in the South Pacific, there is no internet, and very weak internet in most of French Polynesia. Often cruisers have no time to do research about where they’re going before they leave—too busy fixing the boat and provisioning to sit down and read guidebooks.

In 2020, Christine on s/v Sugar Shack volunteered to undertake a major revision of this document, both to reorganize the information into something more cruiser-friendly, and to add their own cruising experiences.

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

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 information on places that the guides don’t cover.

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 Issues**


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

1.3.1 **Entry procedures for EU Citizens**

EU Citizens are not required to get a visa or pay a bond. Your vessel is allowed to stay in French Polynesia for up to three (3) years. After, three years, you will be required to import your boat or leave French Polynesia.

1.3.2 **Entry Procedures non-EU Citizens**

To read the most up-to-date and detailed information on Long-Stay Visas, visit [http://www.jacarandajourney.com/other-good-stuff](http://www.jacarandajourney.com/other-good-stuff).
At the above website, under “Other Good Stuff” you will find 2 documents related to visas in French Polynesia.

- Long-Stay Visas
- 90-Day Visa for French Polynesia

Please note that the visa information in this compendium is **NOT** the most current information. Visit the Jacaranda link above for the most up to date information on the French Polynesia Bond, 90-day visas, and long-stay visas.

**The document found in the above link should supersede anything written below about visas, which is older and less complete. The information below is only left in as an “example.”**

Most “first world” nationalities are granted a “Visa On Arrival” good for 90 days. Some citizens of countries in SE Asia and S. America require a 90-day visa in advance. If you are a citizen of a country that will be granted a Visa on Arrival, 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. Some countries (ie Thailand) require a visa ahead of time.

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 the normal agent fees).

Your visa normally starts when you clear in to your first port Marquesas (Nuku Hiva, Hiva Oa, or Ua Pou), Gambiers (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 leave for French Poly. 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, the U.S., and Canada.

**1.3.3 The French Polynesia Bond**

To read the most up-to-date and detailed information on Long-Stay Visas, visit [http://www.jacarandajourney.com/other-good-stuff](http://www.jacarandajourney.com/other-good-stuff).

Please note that the bond information in this compendium is **NOT** the most current information. Visit the Jacaranda link above for the most up to date information on the French Polynesia Bond, 90-day visas and long-stay visas.

**The document found in the above link should supersede anything written below about visas, which is older and less complete. The information below is only left in as an “example.”**

Page 10
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.

The bond is refundable when you leave, with time and paperwork. The agent “guarantee” fee is not.

You must pay a bond even if you have obtained a long stay visa.

1.3.4 Long Stay Visa

To read the most up-to-date and detailed information on Long-Stay Visas, visit http://www.jacarandajourney.com/other-good-stuff.

The above link, under “Other Good Stuff” are two documents related to visas in French Polynesia.

- Long-Stay Visas
- 90-Day Visa for French Polynesia

Please note that the information in this compendium is NOT the most current information. Visit the Jacaranda link above for the most up to date information on 90-day visas and long-stay visas.

The document found in the above link should supersede anything written below about visas, which is older, less complete and only left in as an example of the process.


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

- A full list a French Embassies in the U.S.: http://www.mfe.org/index.php/Annuaires/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/

2020 verified (2010): I was told by another cruiser 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. My other cruiser friend did it in Panama. Both have been able to secure a long stay multiple-entry visa (ie you can leave and come back). 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 everything. An agent will provide or help you obtain:

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

The Pacific Puddle Jump group negotiate a ‘group rate’ with Tahiti Crew to handle the bond issue and provide the duty-free fuel paperwork.

1.3.5.1 Agents

- Hiva Oa Yacht Services, Sandra, +689 87 232 247, hivaoayachtservices@gmail.com. Marquesas.
- April 2019: Our first arrival to FP was in the Gambiers (from Chile). We hired Tahiti Crew (agents) 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 Gambiers 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 Commissionaire (HC) in Papeete, which was difficult to do from Gambiers. Tahiti Crew was very responsive, friendly, and willing to help you with anything. They speak the local language (French and Tahitian), have relationships with most of 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 Gambiers, it would be wise to engage Tahiti Yacht Services as they can are located in Papeete where the Haute Commissionaires 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 – Last Updated April 2015, verified in 2020:

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).

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. For more about bonds, see Immigration and Fees below.
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 Custom Patrols
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.

1.3.8 Arriving and Departing Crew
Air Tahiti www.airtahiti.aero offers domestic flights to other destinations in French Polynesia, and Air Moorea www.airmoorea.com makes the short hop to Moorea several times daily. Charters flights such as Air Archipel are available on request. Helicopters are one other option.
If your friends (or you) want to see more of French Polynesia, be sure to have them check out Air Tahiti’s multi-island Air Pass.  www.airtahiti.com/articles.php?id=69
If you have crew who entered with you in the Gambiers, but who will leave the boat before you arrive in Pape’ete, 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.
In 2010, some crew trying to fly out from the Tuamotus, through Pape’ete, were severely hassled at the Pape’ete 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).

1.3.9 Yacht in Transit – Spare Parts

March 2020 - Tahiti Cruiser’s Guide:  This information resource for the cruising community now covers all of French Polynesia. Lots of info about what’s available in Tahiti, and how to ship stuff in if what you need is not available.  http://www.tahiticruisersguide.com  -- Soggy Paws

Nov. 2019 – Very useful information on shipping and transporting items into French Polynesia has been compiled and posted at http://www.jacarandajourney.com/other-good-stuff. – Jacaranda

Sept. 2013:  Spare parts and 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 mid-July 2013, these goods must also 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 Euros = 119.33 CFP/XPF, 1 USD is currently approx. 87 CFP/XPF). DHL can be both your shipper and your agent.

– Noonsite

1.3.10 Translation Services

Sabine Wissert translates French, English, and German. +689 87 32 55 47 and sabinewissert@yahoo.fr or view her website 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.

1.4 Maneuvering and Anchoring in the Tuamotus

1.4.1 Tides, Currents, and Passes

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-sack 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.

The popular open source tide program, WXTide32, only shows 3 tide points in the Tuamotus, (Mangareva in the Gambiers, 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 reeey. 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

http://www.svsoggypaws.com/files/index.htm  Download latest version of the Tuamotus Tide Guestimator

Important Note: The version that is on the Soggy Paws site was last updated in 2020. The tides change every year! If you really think you need the “guestimator” you will 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 ¼ of the way from Rangiroa to Hao (considering Longitude only), then you’d calculate the time of your local tide as ¼ x 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’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Longitude Degrees</th>
<th>Longitude Minutes</th>
<th>Normal Max Current</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ahe</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanu</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apataki - N Pass</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apataki - S Pass</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arutua</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faate</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fakarava - N Pass</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fakarava - S Pass</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hao</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katiu</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kauehi</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makemo - NW Pass</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makemo - SE Pass</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manihi</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raraka</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raroia</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tahanea – Middle Pass</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toau - Anse Amyot</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wind Wave Current Factor Suggestions

- 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!

**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.

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 sat “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

1.4.3 Off **icial 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 (direct link to tidal page is below). However, they do not account for the ‘wind/wave factor’ in their tide tables either.

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"

1.4.4 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

1.4.5 Marine Protected Areas

Marine Protected Areas Guide:


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

1.4.6 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 that the boat can swing around in shifting winds without getting the chain 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:

- (2) or more medium-sized fenders or buoys
- (2) 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, usually this would be at least 1.5 times the water depth.
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.
For more information, visit 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—even if you’re not an active diver.

**Not anchoring in coral...** After spending a season in the Tuamotus, we found that if you can make your way to the windward side of the 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. We found this to be true in Fakarava (SE corner), Tahanea (SE Corner), and Raroia (East side), and I’m sure this is why the SE corner in Kauehi is also popular.

**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

### 1.4.7 Using Out-Island Moorings

**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

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. This warning does NOT include Pakakota Yacht Services in Fakarava, who DOES maintain their 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.**
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.

**Avoid Connecting to a Mooring:**

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!

**1.4.8 Navigation in Coral Atolls**

**Sept. 2018**: Navigating in French Polynesia (and other areas with poor charts) – Moana

Use high resolution satellite images (down to zoom level 18). E.g. Ovitalmap (Android, iOS, Windows). Please be aware that some cruisers have had issues with Ovital Maps randomly being deleted from the app.


Make sure you have downloaded all relevant areas before arriving in FP, as Internet is rare, slow and expensive.

SAS Planet: [http://sasgis.org](http://sasgis.org)
Jacaranda has a large number of GE image charts available for free download covering most of FP. These chartlets can be used with OpenCPN. In addition, SV Migration has also made a number of chartlets that cover most of FP. Both can be located at www.jacarandajourney.com, then click on “Other Good Stuff.

**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.

You can create your own, for use with OpenCPN or other navigation software that permits KAP format charts, using the program GE2KAP (recently renamed Sat2Chart). Using this program, you can get a GoogleEarth or other satellite image (using SasPlanet) and with one click, create a KAP file that your navigation program can use. You do need internet at some point to download the satellite imagery, but once the KAP files are created, you do not need internet. *(2019 Update: new format in Sat2Chart and OpenCPN 5 permits higher resolution photos using mbTiles)*

There are some KAP files for French Poly posted on our website: http://svsoggypaws.com/GECharts plus some basic information for people wanting to create their own.

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

### 1.5 Weather

#### 1.5.1 General Tuamotus Weather Conditions April-July

The prevailing wind in the Tuamotus when most cruisers are there is ESE and SE, with average wind speeds are 10-15 kts. However, averages don’t tell the whole story.

The weather that controls conditions in the Tuamotus comes from New Zealand, and from the South Pacific Convergence Zone. Fronts and troughs and lows blast out of NZ and then stall out over French Polynesia. The SPCZ, surprisingly, often extends all the way into the Tuamotus (see the Fiji Nadi Fleet picture for this).

It’s very difficult to predict what any given weather system will do, and the GRIB files almost always predict light and variable winds when a front passes. But at least once each season, it seems that cruising boats in the Tuamotus get surprised by a vicious frontal passage.

The one bad storm we (Soggy Paws) experienced in the Tuamotus; the winds were forecast in the GRIB files to back from SE-E-NE-N-NW-W. Our Northern Hemisphere brains told us to protect ourselves from the north on the frontal passage, and we did that. So, we tucked up in a place with protection from N and W. We figured that we would have plenty of time to move to a location the following day that had better protection from the south, if we needed to.

But the wind only stayed N and W for a few hours, and by the middle of the night, was blowing 25 knots from S—a direction that we were totally exposed across 15 miles of lagoon. In squalls we clocked 40 knots gusts.

As we were getting battered by 6’ waves coming across the lagoon, on a lee shore, we finally dug into our ‘Weather’ folder, and read Jim Corenman’s sage advice in Latitude 38 from 1998, which said “the northerly sector winds will usually be light and of short duration, so if you can’t get 360-degree protection, make sure you are protected from the south, as that is where all the strong winds will come from.”

Since then, we have cringed with every approaching NZ front (coming once or twice weekly in June), but have since experienced nothing but mild variable winds on the frontal passage.

Finally, sometimes deep lows and or highs way to the south will cause ‘reinforced trade winds’. These can cause 15-25 kts winds for a week or two from an easterly quadrant.

In general, our experience was, when you are not sure which way the wind is going to blow, when at an atoll, protect yourself from the South more than anything else. Generally, the stronger winds will blow from the SE.

Page 21
When the wind goes N, it is usually pretty light and of short duration as it backs around an approaching front. – Soggy Paws

2008: Weather, specifically bad weather, bracketed our stay in Fakarava like a set of parentheses. The two-day radio forecast we listen to every morning warned of strong winds from the northwest, so we and many other boats headed for the northern end of Fakarava atoll, the second largest of the Tuamotus. There the northern reef edge slants away to the southwest providing the best-looking protection from the northwest. When we actually arrived at the anchorage off the village of Rotoava (16°03’S; 145°37’W), there were only a couple of other boats, but by the end of the next day maybe fifteen had assembled, many of them fellow Puddlejumpers rushing northward from the atoll's southern pass.

Atolls are a mixed blessing in the protection department. While the motu-topped fringing reef encircling the lagoon keeps out the usual ocean waves, when the winds switch around you can find yourself with your back in a corner and plenty of fetch inside the atolls for waves to build.

And that's exactly what happened to all of us tucked so carefully up at the north end. That two-day forecast made no mention of the fact that the winds would proceed to back right round the compass, from N to NW to W to SW!

After one night of protection, the wind blew 20-30 knots from our exposed side for two to three days. Seas built up to four feet setting the boats rocking and bopping like hobby horses while our anchor chains wound up around coral heads 50’ feet down. Several boats had their snubbers snap when the coral stole their catenaries (the sagging stretch of anchor chain that acts as a shock absorbers), and several others had their dinghies popped when they got yanked into their stern steering vanes.

One European boat actually took himself inside the brand-new rectangular concrete basin of the quay, only to find when the wind and waves switched that he was trapped in a washing machine! He did us all a service, because no matter how uncomfortable things got out at anchor, all we had to do was glance his way at his mast whipping back and forth like a metronome to feel better about our own situations.

Tackless II actually came through all the weather pretty well. She's a heavy old boat and therefore bucks the waves at a more tolerable rate. We got chafe gear in place and a back-up snubber on early in the game, and we lucked out that our coral head wind-ups never brought us up short. The worst thing that happened to us is that we actually got a splash of seawater through the aft cabin portholes!

About a week later when we were in the S end of Fakarava, we had a rerun of the nasty weather. This time, demonstrating that we do have a learning curve, we and the other boats in the anchorage did not run north, and this proved to be the right move.

The winds backed yet again from North through West to South, but this time the area’s scattered reefs provided a sea break against any fetch that could build. Each time the wind shifted, we let out another length of chain, and although our rode on the bottom resembled some kind of macramé knot, we sat relatively steady for all three days that the system passed over us. – Tackless II

1.5.2 Weather Sources – With Onboard Email / SSB

This includes what we use with internet access, without internet access and instructions on how to get weather emailed to you every day at a specific time.


We found 7 possible sources of weather useful while away from internet.

1. The French Polynesia text forecast is available via Saildocs for both 1 day and 3-4-day forecasts.
Download a picture of the French Poly weather zones here:  
http://www.meteo.pf/images/carte_zones_mar.jpg

The 1-day French Polynesia text forecast available via Saildocs in either French/English  
To: query@saildocs.com  
Body of email:  
French 'send fr.poly' or  
English 'send fr.poly.en' to request.

The 3-4 day French Polynesia text forecast available via Saildocs in either French/English  
To: query@saildocs.com  
Body of email:  
send http://www.meteo.pf/previsions.php?carte=me  
(Meteo France Med Range FP weather in French)  
(Med Range FP in English - Not perfect - new service still with some minor bugs)  
Eric from s/v Sarana has graciously made a translator from the French versions to English. If Sarana's  
translation is not available, there are French weather terms provided in Appendix A.

The surface analysis of the SE Pacific by meteo.pf  
To: query@saildocs.com  
Send pf.preiso36  
Send pf.preiso60

The French forecast about French Polynesia in quadrants like A35. ‘A’ is 5-10 degrees S latitude, B is 10-15  
degrees, C is 15-20 degrees, etc. The ‘35’ is the area of longitude from 135-140, ‘40’ is 140-145, etc. Most of  
the Societies are in C40 and C45. Here’s an example of the C40 forecast.

2. The Fiji Met office  

2019 Update: Pre-download the Fleet Code interpreter Program from here:  
http://www.softsea.com/download/PhysPlot.html or as an OpenCPN plug-in

Saildocs request is send fleet.nadi.  

Second product is a text version (not coded) saildocs request is send nadi.sopac.  

These two requests result in two products that cover French Polynesia, one is the ‘Fleet Code’ — a coded text  
file that can be pasted into a software program that will decode the codes into a surface analysis chart that  
covers from New Zealand east to about 120W. Download the Fleet Code program from the link above before
you get out of internet range.

The Nadi Fleet Forecast as Decoded by PhysPlot.

2016: We have used OpenCPN plug in for fleet code as a fleet code reader. This plugin is normally part of the newer versions of OpenCPN. You can download it from the OpenCPN Plugin Page [https://opencpn.org/OpenCPN/info/downloadplugins.html]. – Jacaranda

3. NOAA Hawaii

   Produces a text forecast that covers the Tuamotus. It is a ‘High Seas’ forecast and really only gives locations of fronts and such, and major areas of wind. The SailDocs request is **send FZPS40.PHFO**.

4. GRIB files.

   GRIB files seem to be generally accurate except when stalled cold fronts from NZ run into troughs or convergence zones which lurk sometimes over the Tuamotus. Then, no one, including the French, Fiji, or NOAA weather offices do a very good job of predicting what the wind will do in any given location.

5. New Zealand Weather Faxes

   They only have one transmitter in NZ, so each product is broadcast on a different frequency every 15 minutes starting at xx00 (5Mhz), xx15 (9Mhz), xx30 (13Mhz), xx45 (16Mhz daytime, 3Mhz nighttime). All times are Local Fr. Poly (Tuamotus) times.

   **TRANSMISSION TIMES (Local) & Freqs**

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<th>9459</th>
<th>13550.5</th>
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<td>0600</td>
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<td>1515</td>
<td>1530</td>
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1200 SW PACIFIC MSL PROG H+ 72 0445 0400 0415 0430
(subtract 1.9 to get dial frequency)

6. Hawaii Weather Faxes

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<td>1341</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>0115</td>
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<td>0154</td>
<td>STREAMLINE ANALYSIS</td>
<td>30S - 30N, 110W - 130E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the Web

The most recent full Hawaii schedule is available as a text email via Saildocs or online at [https://www.weather.gov/media/marine/hfhi.txt](https://www.weather.gov/media/marine/hfhi.txt)

The Streamline is available at this URL: [https://www.weather.gov/images/hfo/graphics/stream.gif](https://www.weather.gov/images/hfo/graphics/stream.gif)

The Sat Photo is here: [http://aviationweather.gov/data/obs/sat/intl/ir_ICAOF_bw.jpg](http://aviationweather.gov/data/obs/sat/intl/ir_ICAOF_bw.jpg)

Getting the Hawaii Faxes via Email from Winlink or Iridium email

For a help file on getting Hawaii Faxes via email: [https://www.weather.gov/media/marine/ftpmail.txt](https://www.weather.gov/media/marine/ftpmail.txt)

You can request this help file via Saildocs by sending the request: **Send <url>**

Here are the files I've been sampling using NOAA’s FTP file server because I don't find these in the Winlink catalog and Sailmail won't offer graphics files/attachments.

This just boils down to sending an email to Winlink with some special commands in the body of the email. They require opening up your file size limit (to 40K in some cases) but one or two are practical with a good connection, without using up all one's time. These are the same products available via wxfax IF propagation supports getting them in a viewable, usable form, and IF the timing fits the crews' other plans. So the FTP option is just another arrow to have in the quiver.
PJFB10.TIF - Pacific Wind/Wave Analysis 30S-30N, 110W-130E (Most Current)
PWFE11.TIF - 24HR Pacific Wind/Wave Forecast 30S-30N, 110W-130E (Most Current)
PJFI10.TIF - 48HR Pacific Wind/Wave Forecast 30S-30N, 110W-130E (Most Current)
PWFA11.TIF - Pacific Streamline Analysis 30S-30N, 110W-130E (Most Current)
QYFA99.TIF - Tropical Surface Analysis 40S-40N, 100W-120E (Most Current)
PBFA11.TIF - Significant Cloud Features 30S-50N, 110W-160E (Most Current)
PYFE11.TIF - 24HR Pacific Surface Forecast 30S-50N 110W-130E (Most Current)
PYFI11.TIF - 48HR Pacific Surface Forecast 30S-50N 110W-130E (Most Current)

No subject; use the following format with one or more files listed: open cd fax get PJFI10.TIF quit

I'm finding that connecting to the Winlink Hawaii station must be done the evening before I do a morning weather report (in order to connect). -- s/v Whoosh

7. Bob McDavitt’s Weathergram

Subscribe: bob@metbob.com

Bob McDavitt’s weekly TEXT version of his weathergram covering all the South Pacific. Best for Airmail. Best way to subscribe to the text-only version of weathergram.

Bob McDavitt produces a weekly summary of the weather for the entire South Pacific. Current situation and expected weather are sent out each Sunday with more emails depending on cyclones or severe weather activity. Request to be added to his distribution and once a week you will receive a BobGram.

If you have internet, Bob has two sites... one WITH GRAPHICS and one without.

- The site without graphics is http://weathergram.blogspot.com/ (but with translate button)
- His new site (with graphics) is here https://metbob.wordpress.com/

To get his weekly updates EMAILED to you at your Gmail/Yahoo, etc, locate the “follow” button at the bottom of the home page at https://metbob.wordpress.com, and enter your email address.

Note that if you are a non-English speaker, the blogspot version has a “translate” button that can be helpful.

1.5.3 Weather Sources – Voice

2016: Gulf Harbor Radio from New Zealand gives specific location weather on the SSB. This is a free service (donations accepted) but you need to register with them first. We have heard excellent comments about their weather reporting. Usually they do not cover FP but I assume that is because many people here do not know about them. They do give weather for the area between Bora Bora and Tonga and further west. – Jacaranda

- Freq: 8.752 19:15Z
- Alt Freqs: 8.779 & 8.297
- Contact them via email at weather@ghradio.co.nz

Register at Yachts in Transit New Zealand www.yit.co.nz and send in your position reports via YIT.

If you have internet, you can listen to the Gulf Harbor Radio broadcast via livestreaming on YouTube. (May-Dec only, see link on their website).

From the Yachtsmen's Guide issued by the Tahiti Tourism Board - In French only Météo France : tél. : 36 70 08 (forecaster on live) www.meteo.pf

VHF Channel 26 and 27 (listen for the ‘MSSA Papeete’ announcements on VHF 16 for when the broadcast is).
By BLU (Mahina Radio) on 8803 KHz at 8:45 / 11:00 / 12:00 a.m. and 2:30 / 4:30 / 8:00 p.m.; and on 2182 KHz and then 2620 KHz at 8:03 / 8:33 a.m. and 6:03 / 6:33 / 9:00 p.m. (times are all local Tahiti time, -10UTC)

RFO transmits weather reports on

- FM at 89 and 91,8 MHz, on
- AM at 738 MHz, at 5:55 / 6:57 / 7:57 / 10:30 a.m. and 5:55 p.m.

MRCC Papeete:
8803MHz 07:30, 16:30, (special bulletins if Bft 7+, 12:30, 20:30)
- VHF 13 (for the societies) 06:30, 12:00, 16:00, 20:00
- VHF 26/27 Iles sous le vent

Radio polynesia 1 (Tahiti-Time, all french)
mon-fri: 05:10, 18:26; sat-sun: 06:10, 18:26
- AM: 738Mhz
- FM: polynesie.la1ere.fr/les-frequences-radio.html

1.5.4 Weather Sources – Internet

Soggy Paws has compiled a bunch of specific South Pacific weather links on their website. These are mainly for French Polynesia, westward to NZ, and northward to Hawaii. These are all the government office forecast products that are useful. (and a few non-govt sites).

You can find the French Meteo text forecast, surface analysis, NOAA surface analysis, Bob’s weathergram, and cyclone activity discussion embedded in one web page for minimal download on https://www.pitufa.at/weather-fp.

Windy.com: Of course, everyone’s go-to internet weather these days is Windy.com. With this tool (either a web page or an app on a mobile device), you can look at both the ECMWF and GFS predictions and overlay additional information.

New Zealand Met

Current surface analysis & near term forecast:

These are great maps in small (PNG) format--about 16K per map. But not easily downloadable via email (appears to be no fixed product name for the graphics, unlike other offices' websites).

NOAA Charts in Color from Hawaii

Though these are highlighted in color (much easier reading), they are small files, only about 30K each.

Current Streamline and Streamline Loop:
24, 48, 72 Hr SFC Prog for Entire Pacific
http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/graphics/24hrsfcprog.gif
http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/graphics/48hrsfcprog.gif
http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/graphics/72hrsfcprog.gif


Satellite Pictures
NOAA Charts in Color from Hawaii

Though these are highlighted in color (much easier reading), they are small files, only about 30K each.

Current Streamline and Streamline Loop:

https://www.weather.gov/images/hfo/graphics/stream.gif
https://www.weather.gov/images/hfo/graphics/streamloop.gif

24, 48, 72 Hr SFC Prog for Entire Pacific

https://www.weather.gov/images/hfo/graphics/24hrsfcprog.gif
https://www.weather.gov/images/hfo/graphics/48hrsfcprog.gif
https://www.weather.gov/images/hfo/graphics/72hrsfcprog.gif

Full List of Hawaii Marine Weather Products: https://www.weather.gov/hfo/analyses

Satellite Pictures

This is likely available on a marine weather site somewhere, but here's the link I use for Pacific Satellite:
http://aviationweather.gov/data/obs/sat/intl/ir_ICAO-F_bw.jpg

This picture is updated about every 15 minutes, and if you download and save successive files, you can get a fairly nice moving satellite picture. There are better moving satellite pictures available elsewhere, if you have the bandwidth, but in low-bandwidth situations, this will almost always work.

FIJI Met Office


They have some very good products, but most of them only start coverage west of 155 degrees West.

French Polynesia Met Office

Text forecast https://meteo.pf/fr/bulletin-meteo-marine

36 Hour Forecast Map https://meteo.pf/fr/isofronts

Bob McDavitt's Weekly Weathergram

Subscribe by emailing: bob@metbob.com

Bob produces a weekly summary of the weather and is delivered on Sunday mornings. It's an excellent source of the big picture with more detailed information on various locations in the SP. Bob has two types of weekly "weathergram" emails... one WITH GRAPHICS and one as text only.

Weathergram with graphics is at http://metbob.wordpress.com, Click FOLLOW at bottom right to subscribe. To unsubscribe from WordPress: click the "unsubscribe" link on the bottom of the email. Or, if email wasn’t from WordPress then send a reply email saying LEAVE.

The site without graphics is http://weathergram.blogspot.com/ (but with translate button).

Gulf Harbor Radio Daily Weather

Gulf Harbor Radio “live streams” their daily HF/SSB weather broadcast for the western Pacific. (Mon-Friday, May-Dec only). Find the livestream link on their website: http://ghradio.co.nz
1.5.5  Understanding the Weather Patterns

We (Soggy Paws) are pretty experienced cruisers and feel comfortable normally interpreting our own weather. However, our familiarity was with the Caribbean—Northern Hemisphere—weather. We were a little stumped when we first launched off from mainland South/Central America for French Polynesia. We still have trouble remembering that everything’s backwards when weather systems pass.

Several really good sources of instructional material on South Pacific weather exist.

1. Bob McDavitt’s “Mariner’s Met Pack for the Southwest Pacific” ISBN 1-877197-08-04 published by Captain Teach Press, Auckland, NZ. Though Bob is located in NZ and his weather focus is mainly the western portion of the South Pacific, his instruction manual covers a lot of useful information for the South Pacific in general. Purchase online: Waypoint Books, Bluewater Books If you can’t find it, email Bob at bob@metbob.com

2. Jim Corenmans “Letters from the South Pacific” originally published in the late 1990’s in Latitude 38 Magazine. Copies of this series of articles are floating around among boaters, and might be found on Latitude 38’s website. Jim had a great article on understanding South Pacific weather that is still really helpful to newbies entering French Polynesia. Download from here: http://svsoggypaws.com/files/index.htm

3. David Sapiane’s Weather for the Yachtsman. I downloaded this document from the Gulf Harbor Radio Site http://ghradio.co.nz

4. Some practical tips on planning a passage can be found here: http://www.pacificyachtdeliveries.co.nz/weather.htm

5. The Hacking Family has a great circumnavigation website, and their South Pacific weather page is here: http://hackingfamily.com/Cruise_Info/Pacific/SPacific_Weather.htm

6. Check the Pacific Puddle Jump ‘Files’ section on Weather, there are usually some good, updated documents there. http://groups.yahoo.com/group/pacificpuddlejump/

7. Bruce Balan from s/v Migration wrote a great article in the Feb 2011 Latitude 38 entitled "Fair Weather Sailor - Pacific Weather Simplified" You can find the article here: http://svsoggypaws.com/files/Migrations-PacWxSimplified.pdf

8. Christian from s/v Pitufa wrote a short summary of the South Pacific weather explaining the SPCZ and other phenomena for Cruising World June/July 2019 which can be found at https://www.cruisingworld.com/pacific-weather-routing.

1.5.6  Professional Weather Routing

Generally, the Marquesas – Tuamotus – Tahiti runs are not too difficult, but just to add some info for those of you who worry about weather for the Pacific crossing.

One of the most-mentioned names in the South Pacific when talking about the weather is Bob McDavitt. Professional forecasts can be obtained from Bob McDavitt. Email him for detail at bob@metbob.com

Soggy Paws used a USA-based weather router named Ken McKinley at Locus Weather for the Easter Island to Pitcairn and Gambiers legs of their trip. Ken did a good job for them. https://www.locusweather.com/

Another source of Pay-For weather routing is Bob Cook at Ocean Pro Weather. (we have not used Bob, but he appears to be a professional world-wide router, check details on his website).

Robert Cook, Weather Router, Ocean-Pro Weather & Routing
Website: www.Ocean-Pro.com
oceanpro.weather@gmail.com Naples, FL:
239-775-7435 Cell Phone:  
239-877-4094  
Skype: captcook52@gmail.com

1.5.7 Obtaining Free Weather Information from Saildocs (via Low Bandwidth email)

Most of the information in this subsection was compiled by SY Taitonga in 2019.

Via query@saildocs.com it is possible to get weather information with a low bandwidth (e.g. SSB or Iridium or slow internet ...):

- Grib files (displayed on OpenCPN (we use zygrib.org as well for ECMWF-Model)
- Isobar-Charts and Synopsis as Text from NOAA- and Fiji-Meteo-Data
- Currents OSCAR and RTOFFS from NOAA-Data
- Weathergram from Bob McDavitt in New Zealand, weekly
- ENSO-Discussion, etc.

How to Request an Email from Saildocs:

e-mail to query@saildocs.com
Subject: blank or your choice (e.g. what, where ...)  
Body: See below

In the body, one line per request. If the request starts with...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Request</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>send fr.poly.en</td>
<td>24h FP forecast in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send fr.poly.short.en</td>
<td>Short Range FP in Eng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send fr.poly.long.en</td>
<td>Long Range FP forecast in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send <a href="http://www.meteo.pf/previsions.php?carte=mar">http://www.meteo.pf/previsions.php?carte=mar</a></td>
<td>24h FP in French (sometimes helpful, if the translation is weird)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send <a href="http://www.meteo.pf/previsions.php?carte=ce">http://www.meteo.pf/previsions.php?carte=ce</a></td>
<td>FP in French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send <a href="http://www.meteo.pf/previsions.php?carte=me">http://www.meteo.pf/previsions.php?carte=me</a></td>
<td>Long Range FP in French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send gfs:7S,11S,141W,137W</td>
<td>1,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codes</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APCP,TCDC,CAPE,HTSGW,WVPER,WVDIR</td>
<td>Returns Wind in kn, Gusts in kn (imho mostly underestimated), Waves in m, Pressure in mb (Isobars)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each of the above codes adds to the size of the file that is sent back to you. If you just want the minimum wind and waves and pressure, WIND,WAVES,PRESS is sufficient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send</td>
<td>Spot Grib Forecast. Returns a very small text file for specific lat/long (note the lat/long format is decimal minutes) This one is for 5 days at 3 hour intervals, to be sent at 1700 UTC (leave off the time=1700 if you want it returned right away).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send</td>
<td>French Weather fax surface analysis 36 hour for the big picture incl. fronts, ridges, convergence zones etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send</td>
<td>French Weather fax surface analysis 60 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send</td>
<td>Isobars map N and S-Pacific 24h (shows e.g. weather determined ridges better than pf.preiso..)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send</td>
<td>Isobars map N and S-Pacific 48h</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is HIGHLY recommended that you experiment with Grib file requests with regular email/good internet before you try them on a limited-bandwidth email device.

- |1,1 Area-Resolution (could be 0.5,0.5 or 2,2) .5 is more detailed, but produces a much bigger file. |
- |0,6..168 Time Period (could be 3,6,9,12, ...): Now, and then every 6 hours until 168h |
- |= "continue", because the whole code does not fit into a single line and would fail |

WIND,GUST,WAVES,PRESS,=

If you are very bandwidth-limited, spot forecasts can tell you a lot in a very small message.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Command</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>send PYFK11.TIF</td>
<td>Isobars map N and S-Pacific 48h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send fleet.nadi</td>
<td>Isobars map in Fleet code from Meteo Fiji includes FP. You will need to open this small text file with a fleet code viewer (e.g. add-on in OpenCPN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send FZPS40.PHFO</td>
<td>NOAA weather for the S-Pacific 0-25S, 120W-160E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send nadi.sopac</td>
<td>Fiji weather for the S-Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send abpw10.pgtw</td>
<td>NOAA, SIGNIFICANT TROPICAL WEATHER ADVISORY (W-COAST OF S-AMERICA TO 135E). A text file indicating any tropical weather as it forms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send RTOFS:6S,11S,141W,137W</td>
<td>Ocean current forecast, based on HYCOM, resolution is 0.08 (1/12) deg, and is currently available out 72 hours at 24-hour increments (RTOFS daily files) and available by 12:00z. (in OpenCPN it looks like 0.5deg resolution) (send oscar:6S,11S,141W,137W did not work! svsarana did send an old file)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send RTOFSx:6S,11S,141W,137W</td>
<td>Experimental current forecast available, which goes out to 192 hours: 0-72 at 3-hr increments, and 78-192 hours at 6-hour increments. Available at around 19:00z. (I only get 3 days 24h-increments, 2deg resolution)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send tsunami</td>
<td>Where, when and actions to be taken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send nz.wgrm</td>
<td>Metbob’s weathergram, which comes out only once a week, mostly sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send <a href="http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analyses_monitoring/enso_advisory/ensodisc.html">http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analyses_monitoring/enso_advisory/ensodisc.html</a></td>
<td>Updated monthly, the ENSO outlook from NOAA.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To get general info about Saildocs send a (blank) email to: info@saildocs.com (auto-responder)
To receive "Available Saildocs Grib Data", send the following one-line request to: query@saildocs.com subscribe gribmodels days=0 ("0" means indefinitely).
1.6 Yachtsman Services

1.6.1 Bank / ATMs (Money)

The normal currency in the Tuamotus is the French Polynesa Franc, usually abbreviated CFP or XPF. In June 2020, the exchange rate was 87 CFP/XPF per 1 US dollar. However, the post office will give a 100/1 exchange, so a 500-CFP is about $5.00 USD.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fakarava</th>
<th>Gambiers, Mangareva</th>
<th>Makemo</th>
<th>Rangiroa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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 http://www.jacarandajourney.com/other-good-stuff.

Remember that diesel is about $5.50/gallon and gasoline $6.00/gallon.

1.6.2 Cooking Gas (Propane/Butane)

For Americans: the normal cooking gas for the rest of the world is Butane or a Propane/Butane mix. Butane is almost identical in properties to the propane you are used to, except it doesn’t burn quite as hot, and it’s a little sootier. Propane/butane fill fittings are non-standard around the world, and French Polynesia is no exception. In addition, throughout the islands, everyone just exchanges gas tanks. All the filling goes on back in Tahiti. So, it can be a bit difficult to get US propane tanks refilled.

See individual atoll sections for specifics on cooking gas options in those areas. We were told that just about every magasin will sell gas bottles, but only those confirmed by cruisers are listed below.

Cooking Gas Suppliers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ahe</th>
<th>Apataki</th>
<th>Fakarava</th>
<th>Gambiers-Mangareva</th>
<th>Hao</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kauehi</td>
<td>Makemo</td>
<td>Rairoa</td>
<td>Tikehau</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Tahiti Cruiser’s Guide has a current list of suppliers that fill non-French tanks.

If you wish to fill your own tank, 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 your own. You will need such a fitting off and on as you travel westward with your American tanks.

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. http://www.jacarandajourney.com/other-good-stuff.
Sept. 2019: We found propane pricing varied by atoll. We paid 4500f for 20lbs. You can get American tanks filled in Tahiti, Fakarava and Nuku Hiva. However, if your tank is older than 10 years, they may not fill it, even if it has been recently recertified. Of course, this could be an uncommon situation. – Sugar Shack

July 2016: The cost of butane is a set price in FP. Deposit on the bottle is 3000F Cost of the gas is 2800F. – Jacaranda

2010: The best option is to arrive in French Polynesia with a ‘gravity fill’ setup—basically the fitting end for YOUR tank and 5-6’ length of hose. Then go to a local hardware store and buy the French propane fitting. Then you can ‘rent’ a local tank, and gravity fill from the local tank to your tank. This method works pretty well—hoist the local tank upside down in your rigging, or on your dinghy davit, and place your tank below it. Be patient and eventually your tank will be mostly full.

Here is the info I found on the internet about the ‘gravity fill’ technique:

1. Always wear gloves, as the propane that comes out of a tank it is very cold and can freeze your skin.
2. Connect the tank to be filled with the fuel source.
3. Open the bleed valve of the tank to be filled, the main tank valve and the fuel source valve.
4. As soon as liquid propane starts to spurt from the bleed valve, close the fuel source, the main tank valve and the bleed valve.
5. Disconnect the fueling line as described above.

The ‘full’ tank must be inverted and placed above the empty tank so liquid, not gaseous propane will flow. The connectors and hoses must be purged of air before connection to the tanks. Internal pressure should be released on the empty tank, then the full tank’s pressure plus gravity will transfer liquid propane to the empty tank. It is not possible, without a special pump or a vapor relief valve on the tank being filled, to totally refill the empty tank. But ¾ full is possible, and should get you to Tahiti where you can get a refill.

It is dangerous to overfill a tank - they should be filled only 75% to allow for the liquid to expand if heated.

Oct 2012 Additional Notes on arranging a ‘Gravity Fill’ Setup: Nowadays you can only purchase POL valves that are “Excess Flow” (both the RV industry and Marine (ABYC) have requirements for use of Excess Flow POL valves). Which means there is a safety device that is built into the POL valve to reduce the flow of gas if a major leak occurs. In a gravity fill setup, this would be considered a major leak to the POL valve, and in turn, the gas would be restricted to a very slow rate.

So, when you want to build your own setup, you will want to purchase a Full Flow POL valve. An Excess Flow Valve will work very slowly.

The only manufacturer I have found that still makes Full Flow POL valves is at the link below:

They make different lengths, this one I purchased is 48”. -- s/v Irie

1.6.3 Fuel (Diesel/Gasoline)

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

Fuel Suppliers:

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amanu</th>
<th>Ahe</th>
<th>Apataki</th>
<th>Fakarava</th>
<th>Gambiers-Mangareva</th>
<th>Hao</th>
<th>Toau</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
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). And gasoline had to be pre-ordered. You would need to prepay with the ships dock master. Same guy you pre-pay for veggies and other supplies.

**General Information on Diesel and Gasoline**

2019 verified (2011): In general, in the Gambiers and the Tuamotus, there are no ‘gas stations’, even in the larger towns. – Soggy Paws and Sugar Shack

The locals buy what they need directly from the supply ship, in 200-liter (~55 gallon) drums. Some locals and magasins will keep a private stash in their backyard.

Sometimes the ship has extra fuel, and sometimes they only have what has been pre-ordered. Normally they will only sell full drums, but in one case there were enough cruisers around needing fuel that they agreed to sell in 5-gallon increments.

We did manage to purchase small quantities of fuel on occasion from a local business. In one case, it was a dive shop that we did several dives with. In another case it was a pearl farmer that we became friends with. In another case it was a guy who had been traded a drum of diesel by a passing fishing boat, and they didn’t use diesel.

The best option for getting fuel in the Tuamotus is to find out when the supply ship arrives, and be there on the dock when they arrive, or shortly thereafter, prepared to buy, with cash, and empty right then, a 50-gallon drum. Sometimes the ship only stays a few hours, so get in there as soon as the ship arrives. The price in 2010 was around $5.50 USD per gallon for diesel and around $6 USD per gallon for gasoline. The supply ship typically does not accept the duty-free fuel certificate.

In the Gambiers, the ship accepted CFP, USD, and Euros. Also, in the Gambiers, for boats wanting a lot of fuel, the boat rafted to the ship and they sent down a large-volume hose for them to fill. The ship metered the quantity using their meter (no arguments accepted).

You don’t need a ‘duty free fuel’ paper when you buy from the supply ships. That’s really only valid at the gas stations, and we heard that not all gas stations honor that paper (so ask before you pump!) We understand that if you can wait until you get to Tahiti, duty free fuel is available and is in the $3-$4 USD range.

1.6.3.1 **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 while you are still in the Gambiers and Marquesas, means that you can buy duty-free fuel while still in the French Polynesia before arriving in Tahiti. The Duty Free Certificate is valid for 6-months.

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.

1.6.4 **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)
- Pakakota Yacht Services (shipped from Tahiti)

1.6.5 Importing Parts Duty-Free

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 are located here. This page is in French but translates well with Google Translate:

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

For updates and a lot more details on this topic download the Tahiti Cruiser’s Guide, and Jacaranda’s document called “Shipping and Transporting items into French Polynesia” from http://www.jacarandajourney.com/other-good-stuff

March 2017: The vendors in Pape’tete 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.)

Yachts in 2017 have received parcels in this manner at Marina Papeete and at Marina Taina. Shipping via the mail system from the UK takes approximately 5 weeks. DHL, UPS and Fedex will quote the time frames. We have found Parcel Monkey in the UK very reasonable. – Mary Ann II

1.6.6 Shipping Items In or Out


Express Shipping OUT of French Polynesia (services and phone numbers):
DHL Express: 83 73 72  
UPS: 54 57 27  
FedEx Global Air: 45 36 45

1.6.7 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. Just past the McDonalds at the Tahiti airport is Air Tahiti Freight. They will put your luggage on the same flight or next flight and fly it to your destination. – 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

1.6.8 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. 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 Carrefor, 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.

1.6.8.1 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 it is broken).

Juliette can be reached at 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. (In Fakarava, Cobia departs Tahiti Monday and delivers at Fakarava Wednesday morning and costs 500-1000xpf for a medium size box).

Est. Informatique lists their products at www.est-info.pf. You have to arrange for payment and schedule according to the supply ship.

HM Coursier +689 46 82 82 and hmcoursier@gmail.com. Very professional, organized and responsive. Usually the same price as Juliette.

1.6.8.2 Stores that Deliver to Cargo Ships

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

Both of these stores 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 normally available with all options (unless it is broken).

Polynesia Trading +689 40 45 62 63 or polynesiatrading@loana@gmail.com. They 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. They speak English.

**Maxi Tahiti** can be reached at 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.

### 1.6.8.3 Cargo Ships to the Tuamotus

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

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 three 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. Their schedule for the central Tuamotus is posted on their Facebook page @navette cobia.

**Maris Stella** +689 40 06 10 (SMS). 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 does weekly visits to the NW Tuamotus.

### 1.6.9 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 every town. But veggies get very difficult to find. Stock up on vegetables and fruit in the Marquesas and the Gambiers before you leave. And if you see fresh veggies anywhere, buy them immediately—they may not be there next week when you're ready to re-provision.

Potatoes, onions, carrots, cabbage, and cucumbers are not too hard to find—though shortages do occur if the supply ship gets delayed. The locally-grown tomatoes are small and scarce. If you see them, buy them—they won't be there in a few hours. Lettuce usually only comes on the supply ship, and is gone from the stores within a few hours. (We paid $11 USD for a 3-pack of Romaine Hearts in Fakarava... split it with another boat and got 2 good salads each...and were happy with our purchase, in spite of the outrageous price). However, some locals are growing their own lettuce now.

**Chicken:** Frozen chicken, mostly leg quarters, but sometimes even boneless skinless breasts—easy to find.

**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. We bought something expensive that said ‘cube roll’ from Uruguay in Fakarava that we ended up having to thaw and divide into thirds—but it ended up being pretty good steak-like meat. We sliced it 1” thick and treated it as steak with good results.

**Lamb:** We did also find some nice lamb from NZ in one store in Fakarava, but often the lamb is packaged as a large leg, costing around $30 USD.
None of the meat is displayed—look for the top-loading freezers and don’t hesitate to rummage around. 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 (it helps to know the French words for beef, pork, and lamb. 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 (and perhaps distribute orders to locals). 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.

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).

Papeete has wonderful grocery stores at not too outrageous prices. See the Societies Compendium for what to expect in the Society Islands.

1.6.10 Trash Disposal

Most atolls will have proper trash receptacles that you can utilize. Stop by the Mairie in each atoll to pay for your trash disposal.

However, 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 backyard and should be left the way you found it.

**Recycling:** Some atolls can handle recycling. They recycle plastic, glass, and aluminum. Please be sure to separate your trash from plastic (clear and colored bottles), glass, and cans.

1.6.11 Water

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

2010 verified 2019: We had a watermaker, and so didn’t pay as much attention to this question as we should have. However, here’s what we know...

All the 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 Tahanea, at the east pass, there are a couple of houses that are usually uninhabited that have cisterns. We were invited to use all the water we needed by the ‘park ranger’ from Faaithe who came by while we were there. (we took our laundry ashore and did it right there next to the cisterns).
- 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

1.6.12 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 cops may not react well, either they want some too or they don't want you trading it into their village.

Good items are women’s cosmetics, fishing equipment, snorkel gear, good quality backpacks, toys, school supplies.

It's best to just take what you have to trade with and see what they will give. 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. We've never paid cash for pamplemousse, limes, or bananas.

In general, the Gambiers are fairly wealthy as they produce the most pearls. Most locals will want local currency here rather than trade. – Jacaranda

1.7 Communications

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

1.7.1 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

1.7.2 SSB Nets

Polynesian Magellan Net
**PolyMagNet** (formerly known as the Polynesian Magellan Net): Found at 8.173USB. There are two scheduled net times. The morning net is at 1800Z and the evening net is 04:00Z. For reference, 1800Z is 08:00 Tahiti time, 0830 Marquesas time, 0800 Tuamotus time.

During off season, the morning net is only for emergency traffic and underway boaters. 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 underway boaters and general check ins.

**Pacific Seafarer’s Net**

If you’re a ham, for longer passages, we always checked in with the Pacific Seafarer’s Net. 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 14,300 Khz 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. They start calling boats on the roll call at 0310UTC, and when they finish (30-60 minutes later), they call for boats getting ready to go on passage to get on the 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.

**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](https://northlandmaritimeradio.nz/products/passage-tracking). Contact [peter@northlandradio.nz](mailto:peter@northlandradio.nz).

### 1.7.3 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.


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.

**Jan. 2020:** GoogleFi will work in most places Vini works. Vini tended to work in most major islands/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).

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 to 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

2018: Thanks to Mark on Starlet for letting me know that Vini is now able to run both data and voice thru the same sim card. This is a recent event (2018) so no need to buy two sim cards. BUT data is very expensive using this method. Best to sign up for a plan if possible.

I checked in the Vini office (3-20-18) in Papeete and was assured that sim cards purchased in Marquesas can now be used for both data and voice. – Jacaranda

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).

Now days (2016) almost everyone uses cell phones and there are towers spread thru out the Marquesas and the Tuamotus. We have been able to get cell access in some very rural areas. Buy telephone minutes as prepaid cards in the post office or many of the small shops and you can call world-wide. 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.

The cellular operator in French Polynesia is called ‘Vini’. Voice & Data SIM cards are often available in the post offices in Tuamotus.
The Tuamotus area does not have 3G, only 2G, and hence the data transfer is "extremely slow". We use a USB dongle that we have used throughout Central and South America unlocking it years ago. Most people use a smart phone (Apple, Samsung, etc) as a hotspot. -- Soggy Paws updated by Jacaranda

1.7.4  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.


Atolls with some internet access:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ahe</th>
<th>Apataki</th>
<th>Fakarava</th>
<th>Gambiers, Mangareva</th>
<th>Hao</th>
<th>Keuhe</th>
<th>Makatea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Makemo</td>
<td>Manihi</td>
<td>Raroia</td>
<td>Rangiroa</td>
<td>Takaroa</td>
<td>Tikehau</td>
<td>Toau</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 3G internet access either with your smart phone, 3g capable tablet or with a Vini 3g 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.

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.

If you stay in one of the marinas in Papeete, ask them to write a letter for you stating you are staying in the marina. Take that letter to Vini and ask for an annual plan to receive significant discount. We paid the year up front so we did not have to bother finding a Vini store each month to make a payment. We paid a flat fee for the contract and small box (around $60-80 USD) and then $50/mo for 10 gigs. They had several monthly plans including 2, 4, 6, and 10 gigs. – 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

2011: In 2010/2011 when this guide was first written, internet, where it was available, was 100% via wifi (mostly paid service). Now things are migrating to cell data. See above section on the quirks of cell data access in French Poly. – Soggy Paws

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!!

1.7.5 News

Here are some sources of news that we used to keep abreast of what was happening in the world.

English Language Voice News

After a lot of research on the internet before we left Central America, I found that (a) the old standbys like Voice of America and the BBC have mostly moved online. (b) 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.

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
1.7.6 News Via Email


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 with this in the body: send http://www.npr.org/sections/news/. – Jacaranda

2010: I don’t know of any news service that formulates a customizable daily news email for yachts at sea (if you do, please email Soggy Paws, see email address at front of this guide).

But 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 felt 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 what Reuters offers at http://links.reuters.com. – Soggy Paws

1.8 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.

1.9 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Atoll</th>
<th>Type of Diving</th>
<th>Dive Operations / Tank Refills</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hao</td>
<td>Pass Dives</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fakarava - North</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fakarava – South</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toau / Otuigu</td>
<td>No (Fakarava North **)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 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.

1.10 Haul Out, Storage, Repair Facilities

See individual atoll section for more details.

Apataki Carenage Boat Yard is the only facility in the Tuamotus for hauling, repairing, or storing a yacht. This facility is new as of 2008 or 2009, and 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 new (as of 2009) 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).

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 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 the Gambiers, that’s the place to buy the famous black pearls. They are reputed to be better quality and less cost than anywhere else in French Polynesia. We found lots of pearl farms there, but only one pearl ‘shop’ in Rikitea. There, 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 in the Gambiers 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: Unfortunately, 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.

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 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.
1.12 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):

http://www.jacarandajourney.com/other-good-stuff

From Wikipedia – January 2019: 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.

2010: I personally know someone who got a severe case in the Bahamas—3 boats shared the same large yellowtail snapper at a potluck. By morning, they were all very sick, and a couple of people from each boat were so sick that they were airlifted off for immediate hospitalization. They spent at least a month recovering, and even a year later were reporting lingering symptoms. As the toxin is cumulative, they can never eat another fish.

In the Tuamotus, locals told us “bring us the fish and tell us exactly where you caught it, and we will tell you if you can eat it.” However, locals do get ciguatera too! – Soggy Paws

In the Gambiers, the problem is much much worse—even traditionally “safe” fish can be highly toxic. A friend caught a grouper on his way out of the W pass, and ate it for dinner. He was very sick for the next 3 days as he was sailing single-handed northwards to the Tuamotus.
1.13 Cruising Information Sources

1.13.1 Stopover Handbook / Yellow Flag Guide (PDF)
This is a 42-page color "brochure" created by the Yellow Flag Guide, called the Stopover Handbook in French Polynesia for Mariners. It is sometimes available in printed form from the Puddle Jump group ahead of time, and/or handed out on arrival in the Marquesas. We downloaded a PDF copy from this website:

https://en.pf.yellowflagguides.com/

It is available in both French and English.

It includes a lot of useful information about all of French Polynesia—clearance information, etc. It includes a nice 2-page map of FP, and shows where fuel is available. Also has advertisements from marine-related businesses that can be useful.

The printed Version 2020/2021 can be obtained at Yacht-Services-Nuku-Hiva and the haul-out yard in Hiva-Oa Maintenance Marquesas.

Note: If you can't find it on the above website, the latest version I have found (2020-2021) is posted here:

http://svsoggypaws.com/files/#frpoly

1.13.2 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 (2016-2019): 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

Pitufa (2013-2020): Birgit and Christian on sailing yacht “Pitufa” (Spanish for Smurfette) 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 the Gambiers 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/

Sugar Shack (2018-2019): Matt and Christine on Sugar Shack arrived in the Gambiers in early 2019 and have been sailing French Polynesia for over a year. 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. http://www.svsugarshack.com

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.


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 the Gambiers and made his way through the Tuamotus, stopping at Amanu, Hao, and Fakarava. Duplicat is a Priviledge 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.


**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 a several month 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](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.blogspotcom](http://yolotrautz.blogspotcom)

**Narama (2011):** "Narama" is 33ft sloop drawing 6.5 feet, with Stephen and Heidi aboard.  
[http://naramasvoyage.blogspot.com/](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 the Gambiers in May, and were in the Gambiers for June and part of July, 2013. Irie is a Fountaine Pajot Tobago, a 35 foot catamaran with a beam of about 19 feet. Follow their adventures on [www.itsirie.com](http://www.itsirie.com)

**Pursuit IV (2010) - Pursuit IV went from Gambiers to Hao late April 2010, where they found the pass ‘impassable’ due to high winds from the S, and then went to Rarioa, a convenient jumping off place for their destination of the Marquesas. Pursuit IV is a Liberty 47, a 47 foot monohull with a 6 foot draft. Pursuit’s blog is here:**  

**Whoosh (2010) - Whoosh only stopped at Kauehi and Toau in the Tuamotus. Whoosh ‘s major contribution is to the Pepe’ete information in Section 1 (most of Whoosh’s information was migrated to the Societies Compendium)**

You can find Whoosh’s log at:  

**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](http://svnakia.blogspot.com)

**Salamander (2010):** Salamander emailed us an update on Rangiroa.  
[http://blog.mailasail.com/salamander](http://blog.mailasail.com/salamander)

**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.

**Fly Aweigh (2010) - We never met Fly Aweigh, but stumbled on their blog when searching for recent first hand accounts of Rangiroa and Tikehau.**  
Soggy Paws (2010 - 2011) - Soggy Paws was in the Gambiers 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://svsoggypaws.blogspot.com

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 Gambiers – 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.

Nine of Cups (2009) - Nine of Cups came in from Chile via the southern route, arriving in the Gambiers. They wrote a lot about the Gambiers, but not much about the Tuamotus. Nine of Cups is a deep draft 44’ cruiser. http://www.nineofcups.com

Migration (2008-2009) - Migration is a trimaran with a beam of 25’ and 4’9” draft. They entered French Polynesia from the southeast (see map below) in 2008, and traveled NW toward Tahiti. They then went back to the northern Tuamotus enroute to the Marquesas from Papeete in 2009. Most of their comments (and most of the Google Earth shots) in this booklet come from Bruce’s website. Bruce has also contributed a few comments via the PPJ Yahoo Group. http://brucebalan.com/migrations

Tackless II (2005-2006) - T2 is a 44’ CSY center cockpit cruiser (5.5’ draft). They first came into French Polynesia in 2005, wintered over in Raiatea, and continued west in 2006. They made a fairly quick passage through the Tuamotus, stopping only at Kauehi and Fakarava. http://www.thetwocaptains.com/logbook/frenchpolynesia.htm

Ocelot (The Hacking Family) (2005) - This is a family traveling around the world on a catamaran. They have done a great job documenting where they've been and what they've learned. Here is their web page for the Tuamotus. There’s a lot of other useful information about French Polynesia, and other Pacific destinations on their website. http://hackingfamily.com/Landfalls/Newsletters/Tuamotus/tuamotus_letters.htm

Twelfth Night (May 2004) - Twelfth Night is a 40’ Passport sloop with 5’8” draft. Their report on the Gambiers appeared in the Oct 2004 edition of the SSCA bulletin.

Sloepmouche (2002-2003) - Sloepmouche is a 46’ Cross Trimaran with a 5’ draft, with Luc Callebaut & Jackie Lee aboard. Sloepmouche’s contributions are taken from a detailed Noonsite entry last modified on 2002-08-19. Sloepmouche is also a prolific SSCA contributor--search for their excellent information on all the places they have visited in the Pacific.

1.13.3 Facebook Groups

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

French Poly Cruisers https://web.facebook.com/groups/950473935144833/ 2000 members

A French Polynesia Cruiser Facebook group has been started and 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.

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

Pacific Voyagers 2020 https://web.facebook.com/groups/PPJ2020fleet/ 903 members
1.13.4 AVP (Sailing Association of French Polynesia)


AVP is the Sailing Association of French Polynesia. There are 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 your anchorages, safer moorings, and a more positive cruising experience for you.

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.”

They have a Facebook page too: https://www.facebook.com/DesVoiliers/

1.13.5 Pacific Puddle Jump

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 full of bloat from people who ask the same questions over and over again, without doing any research of their own. This group recently moved to Groups IO. Older information previously found on Yahoo will not be updated, so please visit the Groups IO for new information. (as of Nov. 2019)

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.

1.13.6 Tahiti Cruiser’s Guide (online)

http://tahiticruisersguide.com 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. 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.

1.13.7 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.

1.13.8 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.
1.13.9 French Polynesia Cruisers Facebook Page

http://facebook.com/frenchpolynesiacruisers

A French Polynesia Cruiser Facebook group has been started and 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.

1.13.10 French Polynesia Birds

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

1.13.11 Sea Seek


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.

1.14 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 steals it (in electronic form).

What we have done here is cross reference which guide covers which atoll, since none of them cover all the atolls.

The best printed cruising guide for this area is Charlie’s Charts, covering more of the atolls, with good sketch charts. However, no guide covers all the atolls that cruisers normally go. To get the best coverage, I would have South Pacific Anchorages and the Bonnette guide as well.

1.14.1 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.

For anyone going to a French-speaking cruising ground, 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.

1.14.2 Cruising Guides

1. 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.

2. 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)
   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.


7. **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, so I have put the latest copy of the English version on my website at [http://svsoggypaws.com/files/#pacific](http://svsoggypaws.com/files/#pacific)

   It includes a lot of useful information about all of French Polynesia—clearance information, etc. It includes a nice 2-page map of FP, and shows where fuel is available. Also has advertisement from marine-related businesses that can be useful. However, coverage in the Tuamotus is limited to Manihi, Fakarava, Rangiroa, and Tikehau (all in the NW).

**Dec. 2019:** View and download some of the out of print cruising guides from Jacaranda at [http://www.jacarandajourney.com/other-good-stuff](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.

**2010:** When we were going through the Tuamotus in 2010/2011, Charlie’s Charts was really out of date. I haven’t seen the newer version, and so can’t comment. We used the Guide to Navigation and Tourism quite a bit. Nadine Slavinsky’s Pacific Crossing Notes are new, I haven’t seen them. The rest (mainly older guides) were interesting, but in my opinion, not very useful (you’ll get a lot more out of this compendium than the rest of the guidebooks listed here). The full list is below. — Soggy Paws

**1.14.3 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](http://svsoggypaws.com/files/#frpoly)

**1.14.4 Books on Underwater Life**

   Or can purchase a download version from [New World Publications, Inc.](http://www.newworldpublications.com) Jacksonville, Florida
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, Tuamotu 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 5-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 and down on our bow causing the boat to hobby horse. It was extremely scary and nerve racking but we made it 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 really 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 Rarioa. 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. It seems to me that the weatherman is the only person that can be wrong so often and still keep a job. We look at 4 different models for the forecast and not one predicted our current weather. 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. Matt was convinced we would see a 200 nm day. Would be a big day considering we made 86nm on day 1 and only 60% of that was VMG. We had one reef in the main and 2 reefs in the jib. I felt horrible the entire day and spent my downtime in the fetal position. 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.

Note that the Tuamotus are a half hour behind the Marquesas, the same time zone as Tahiti. – Starry Horizons

**June 2008:** Our four-day passage from Nuku Hiva to Kauehi will go down in the logbooks as one of the grandest, easiest, most pleasant ones we have ever made. From right out of the chute, the sailing conditions were great. Ten to fifteen knots on the beam with seas maybe one to two feet! Tackless II really excels in these conditions. With no seas to knock her back we could put up all that sail area and off we went, leading the pack of other boats that jumped on the same sailing window directly from Taiohae. – Tackless II

### 2.1.3 Fakarava to Fatu Hiva

**June 2010:** We took the southern route into French Polynesia, arriving by way of the Gambiers. 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 Raroia, and got pinned down by another set of reinforced trades for 10 days.

But the forecast eventually showed a break in the high pressure areas coming our way, and when the boats in the Societies were finally reporting calm winds, we started getting ready to make the 400 mile sail to the Marquesas.

Once the wind slacked off, we gave it a day for the seas to subside, and also to allow the wind to make its way ESE as forecast.

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 motorsailed high of our straight-line course, trying to get some easting, and make miles while the conditions were light. We were VERY GLAD later that we had done this, as the last day, the wind went to 20-25 knots. 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 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 (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. 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).

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 right up to Omoa.

Once in the lee, we motored very close in along the shore, sightseeing. The CMap 2008/2009 charts are again very accurate.

10-27.909S / 138-40.042W. We anchored in the Baie de Vierges (Hanavave), in 25’, with (it seems) good holding. No matter how calm it is here when you arrive, you MUST make sure your anchor is well set, as accelerated gusts funnel through the valley and into the anchorage. Though the wind ‘outside’ was only 20-25 knots, we clocked gusts as high as 60 knots in the anchorage at Hanavave.

By this time, all the Puddle Jump boats were far west, and we had only one other boat anchored with us in Hanavave. – Soggy Paws

2.2 Between the Atolls in the Tuamotus

2.2.1 Hao to Makemo, Katiu, Tahanea, Fakarava, Toau

2010: Note that Visions is a 62’ monohull and they typically make 8 knots on passage.

From Hao, it was an easy overnight to Makemo, the SE pass. They transited up inside Makemo with no problems, and exited Makemo from the NW pass.

From Makemo, they went on a daytrip to Katiu, anchored briefly, but decided they didn’t like the anchorage (in the pass), and then overnighted to Tahanea.
From Tahanea, they motorsail fast enough to make the Tahanea to Fakarava S pass in a day trip (most boats opt for an overnight). They transited from Fakarava S pass to the town by the north pass, and then out the N pass to Toau, Anse Amyot. – Visions of Johanna

2.2.2 Apataki to Rangiroa

The passage from Apataki to Rangiroa was short but uncomfortable. It started with an easy downwind sail in the flat water of the lagoon. Then we rode through the standing waves in the southern pass at Apataki, which is shaped like a dogleg. It was easily our hairiest pass run yet. The trip is only 90 Nm but you have to go through the passes and lagoons at both atolls in good light, so basically it is an overnight no matter how you look at it. We had to go slowly so as not to arrive too early at the Rangiroa pass. To slow us down, we had only the jib up, then kept furling in a bit more as the wind built through the night. Usually we use the main to keep us from rolling, but it would have been too much sail for this passage. With only a scrap of jib up, no main sail, and wind chop from the south east crossing swell from the south west we rolled all night long. Let’s just say neither of us got much sleep last night. – Mata’irea

2.3 To/From Tahiti

2.3.1 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. Now that we had our long-stay visas, we had plenty of time and didn’t need to rush (most nonEU cruisers get only 3 months). So why spend days sailing but not getting very far? I’d gotten a bad rope burn on my hand so we decided to take it easy and stop in the Tuamotus. We’d have preferred to be farther east—away from potential cyclones—but we would just keep a close eye on the tropical storm forecast.

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 beautiful Anse Amyot on Toau; home of our friends Gaston & Valentine, whom we met last year.

After 10 days at Toau, we decided to sail for the Marquesas again. We wanted to visit those islands before the crowds of boats arrived from Panama, the Galápagos, and Mexico in April, May and June. Unfortunately, Poseidon didn’t think it was time for our voyage. After three days we still had 350 miles to go and the wind was blowing directly from the northeast... and strengthening. Our foredeck hatch was leaking (we would later discover a cracked weld in the frame). We had a ½ knot current against us and were making about 50 miles a day toward our goal. Another week of this didn’t sound fun. We spun the wheel—well, the dial on the autopilot—and headed back to the Tuamotus.

(They went to Katiu and then to Makemo, where they finally got favorable winds to the Marquesas.)

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. We sealed the leaking forward hatch with duct tape and set off.
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. 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. (Note: the website says ‘Takapoto’ in one place and Tepoto in another. Looking at the island locations and their probable route, I think he meant Tepoto). – Migration

2.3.2 Tuamotus to Tahiti

July 2020 – Tahanea to Tahiti: 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 parasailor 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 parasailor 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.

Total miles sailed (SE corner to Papeete) 302nm, max speed 12.5, average speed 5.8kt, total moving time 51 hours. – Sugar Shack

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

2.4 To/From Hawaii

In 2010/2011 several boats made their way up to Hawaii for the winter for boat work and reprovisioning (and to get out of 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).

2.4.1 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.

Manihi is a good landfall—a west-facing nice (leeward) pass, a nice community with some English-speaking locals, a decent anchorage, and internet! Though it is not an official port of entry to French Polynesia, there is not even a gendarmerie, and no one seems stressed that we are here without being formally checked in. Two of the 4 boats eventually checked in with the Gendarmerie in Rangiroa a few days later. They were able to complete their initial paperwork (and start their 3 month ‘clock’), but were told to just wait until they got to Tahiti for their formal check-in (similar to what happens in the Gambiers).

Two boats opted to stop in Manihi and then Toau without checking in (no gendarmes either in Toau) and delay their check in until Tahiti.

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

# 2.5 To/From Gambiers

May 2020: Route: Gambiers - 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. Both boats left an hour before us. 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: Sugar Shack’s route was Gambiers - Hao - Tahiti

We could not wait for a good weather window as we had a flight to catch in Tahiti. We left the Gambiers 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, which we love. Sure, we could have used a lot more wind, but we made it safely. Several other boats got stuck in the Gambiers for another 7 weeks waiting for a weather window. – Sugar Shack

April-June 2010: Visions of Johanna’s route was Gambiers – Hao – Makemo – Katiu – Tahanea – Fakarava – Toau (Amyot) – Papeete. The Gambiers to Hao passage was 450 miles, undertaken in late April with winds from the E at 15-20. The only excitement was trying to enter the pass at Hao after days of strong winds (see that story in the Hao section). And the rest of their inter-Tuamotus passages in the next section. – Visions
3 SE TUAMOTUS - SOUTH TO NORTH

The order the atolls are presented in this section is in the order you would normally encounter them coming up from the Gambiers. Though some guidebooks include the Gambier group as part of the Tuamotus, Gambiers is covered in the Gambiers 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)
Guidebooks:
South Pacific Anchorages, 2nd Ed, 2001, pg 23

“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.

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

3.4 Hao (Pass, Supplies, Internet, Flights to Tahiti)

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.

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

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 also a fisherman and very plugged into tides and slack water. He does speak English and was very 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 is apparently quite high today 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. (note, they were later told that there had been NO slack current for 3 days because of the winds/seas, but 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.

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 marina 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 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 ¼ 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, (2) 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 because the fenders no longer reached due to the increase in water height and 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

May 2019: There is an old military basin with concrete walls that many cruisers have utilized. We’ve been told that up to 22 boats have fit in here (rafted side by side, Med moor, and crammed in). – 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') and 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 or so. 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. We floated our chain and enjoyed this majestic anchorage. 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. It’s best to have a look out on the bow, especially once you make the turn. – Sugar Shack
18°24'S / 140°40'W. We stayed a few days off Nake, in a super smooth anchorage as it has little possible fetch except with a W wind. A few people live here from copra, fishing, and pearl farming and on Sundays, you can make the fête (party) with them. They were glad to show us around and to share their meal! We were perhaps the 10th boat to ever have stopped here and we enjoyed the unspoiled contact! The legend has it that you have not visited Hao until you have visited Nake!

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. Another anchor spot our friends dropped in was 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 a 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!

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.

Phone: Hao Gendarmerie phone # 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 3rd 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 Yachtsman 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 in Amilee or Optepa and have Cecile deliver to the dock.
- **Magasin Jojo** diesel & gas 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.

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 the quay, go to main road, turn right, on right hand side, 2nd 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 Amelie has changed money for some cruisers.

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 bashed against the concrete wall. The hull sustained a \( \frac{1}{4} '' \) 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

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 3rd 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 sore on my ankle that quickly turned into a staff infection while we were underway from Gambiers 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.

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 5G could be accessed here but we did not see it. Pension Chez Parua has much faster internet than the Gambiers, but not at 5G.

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 throughput 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

Jan 2019 (upd Jun 2020): There are 3 stores to the right of the quay on the main road. All 3 stores are well stocked and very clean. – Jacaranda

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 that you can see from 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 as we stopped by 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 0233Hours: 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.

#### 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 attempting 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 cold on the street to buy pot. 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 are going to head out early tomorrow morning for the pass and transit to Amanu where we will find less coral and a much smaller fetch. – Nehene

**April 2010:** We headed into town and were immediately picked up by a very nice lady named Cammile who is a special ed teacher at the school here. She gave us a tour, had us over for cold drinks, and then invited us to join her for dinner and internet usage at her house tonight which we can't refuse. Everyone here has been amazingly nice and friendly. There are quite a lot of people here and a ton of kids playing around town. We aren't too sure how long we will stay, but may break out the bikes tomorrow morning to take a tour of the island and head to the southern end. The island is only about 3 blocks wide and flat as a board. (Visions stayed only a couple of days at Hao—concluding that they had very friendly people, but not much else to offer). – Visions of Johanna

### 3.5 Amanu (Pass, No 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:** There were cruisers that were saying Amanu is ciguatera free and they have been eating various reef fish. 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. Proceed at your own risk. – Jacaranda
3.5.1 Pass Teikariri

Amanu has one pass called Passe Teikariri. Entrance at Pass 17°50'S / 140°51'W. The Navionics charts for the Amanu pass are 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.

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 neighbouring Hao) was useless and did not correspond to the guesstimator 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.

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 it with about 2 knots of 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 not seem to be 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. If you cannot see the full length of the pass, then obviously it would be better to wait for slack. – Fellow Traveler

2008: Only 200 people live on Amanu and, because it isn’t listed in any cruising guides, very few boats visit. If your boat draws less than 2 meters (Migration is a trimaran that draws 1.5), you can enter the tiny protected ‘harbor’ at the village. It wasn’t the depth as much as the width that provided the excitement here. We had about a meter on each side to spare. But once in, we were well protected from the strong trade winds which blew hard across the lagoon for several days. 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. Visit the different parts of the atoll... don’t just stay by the village. And you can anchor at the star-shaped reef in the middle of the atoll. – Migration

2004: Enroute from Gambiers to further north in the Tuamotus when a passing front switched the wind to NW, and they took refuge in Amanu.

We navigated the pass into the Amanu atoll lagoon without incident at 1430 local time the day before yesterday (Sunday). Conditions were just about ideal, helped by an incoming tidal current of 2 or 3 knots. Had the tide been ebbling fast through this narrow cut it might have been a very different story, as a strong NW swell had kicked up the night before when a cold front passed through, shifting the wind from NE to NW and increasing it to 15 to 20 kts. – Estrella
2002: Pass 17°50’S / 140°51’W. Since we had little info about the pass, I heard traffic (in French) on VHF 06 and a local came out to pilot us in! It's not that difficult if you get to the entry and stay in the center of the channel. With good light you see well the right turn you have to make at the end of the pass! -- Sloepmouche

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.

3.5.2.1 Pass and Town Anchorage

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

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

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 (see Migration’s report). -- Fellow Traveler

2004: 17°51.59’S / 140°51.35’W. Estrela (2004): Turning immediately to starboard (toward the SW) after entering from the pass, we glided slowly by the small village as people waved and shouted, especially the numerous children. We anchored as close as we could SW of the town, but not without a little excitement. We found the lagoon to be deep right to the fringing coral reef along the interior perimeter, ranging in depth from over 100' to about 60' until it shoals sharply as one gets too close to the reef to be able to anchor and still have sufficient swinging room.
No sooner had we put the anchor down and turned off the engine, though, but a family in a small outboard motor boat came out from the village to warn us that this was a dangerous spot to anchor if a strong wind came out of the NE or E. The Amanu lagoon extends nearly 15 miles to the northeast from this spot and the long "fetch" would allow large wind-driven waves to build up, even though we were protected from the ocean swell. The villagers recommended that we move around a nearby point where a bulge in the fringing reef would protect us from such winds.

By now our friends on Alii Nui had also entered the pass and anchored near us. So both boats now began to raise anchor and move as advised. Their move went without incident. We had a tough time raising our anchor. The chain had caught on something hard on the bottom. We hope it was just rock and not a living coral formation. By moving back and forth repeatedly with the engine, letting out and hauling back chain and putting some uncomfortable stresses on our bowsprit anchor roller system we were finally able, after an hour of work, to raise the anchor and get ourselves re-anchored around the point just at dark, and unfortunately again in over 60' of depth.

But what a spot we finally had -- a stone’s throw from a little tidal inlet through to the outside reef, along a shore fringed by tall, laden coconut palm trees and a narrow sandy beach. An enormous manta ray flew by Estrela just below the surface, its great wings slowly pumping up and down and cavernous oval mouth open to inhale its minute prey. Lovely, rose and orangey hues in the sky, and a balmy breeze. Were we finally in paradise?? It sure felt so. We all gathered aboard Alii Nui for a potluck dinner celebration after our 7+ day passage from Rikitea, eager to get in the water and go exploring in the morning.

We enjoyed six nights anchored in Amanu lagoon before sailing to nearby Hao atoll for one night. – Estrela

3.5.2.2  South of the Pass

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 of all sizes, 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

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, just about 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

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and South, and excellent protection from the North and West. It is completely exposed to the 5-mile fetch to the South East.

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. If I had to do it again, I would consider just tying a line to the base of a coral head as my second "anchor". If it is a long enough line, one could bring both ends to the boat, then just drop one end and pull the other to retrieve it in a hurry...maybe...if it does not get jammed!

I thought the area to the NE of the red dot was too deep to anchor, but I did see a French boat anchor here, and the pic shows a possibility in N. winds, but with a definite risk of swinging into the reef with anything from the South. I snorkeled the SW side of this "bowl", and it drops off too fast to be useful for anchoring. — Fellow Traveler

3.5.2.3 Star Anchorage – Etoile Reef (in the middle of the lagoon)
Jan. 2019: We spent a number of nights at the Star anchorage that Bruce mentions from Migration. 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. – Jacaranda

June 2017: We viewed the ‘navel’ as a day anchorage only - holding wasn’t great. – Duplicat

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.

2010: 17°48’S-140°46’W. Locals says you have to go to the star shaped reef in the middle of the lagoon before you can claim to have arrived in Amanu! We did go with Tautu and family 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

2010: After Heiva, we headed to Etoile Reef, known as the navel of Amanu; a star-shaped reef right in the middle of the lagoon. We anchored and snorkeled around the entire reef. – Migration

3.5.2.4 Anchorage Along the Northern Edge of the Lagoon

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 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.

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

3.5.2.5 Southern Anchorage

June 2017: The south anchorage listed below is very 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 direction. There is plenty of room to swing without encountering any coral heads that would risk most boats (Fellow Traveler draws 6.5 feet).
There are possibly fewer coral heads in the deeper water between the spit and shore, but I did not investigate. I can free-dive 25 feet and clear my chain if need be, but not deeper.

I also show one I did not explore, on the SE side that looks slightly better than what I did find, and the reef in the center of the atoll. – Fellow Traveler

### 3.5.3 Yachtsman Services

#### 3.5.3.1 Fuel (Diesel / Gasoline)

**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 Provisions

**June 2020:** The town has two shops (one of them with freezer/fridge), a post office and a town hall. We were asked by a patrol boat from Hao to check in at the town hall, so bring your passports and boat papers. The town hall has good free wifi on weekdays from 15:30h - 7:00h and all weekend. 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. The locals play volleyball, football and baskbetball in the afternoons. They were all friendly, even a bit shy. -

**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

**2010:** 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. – Fellow Traveler

### 3.5.5 Cruiser Reports

**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 Gambiers 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
2008: Only 200 people live on Amanu and, because it isn't listed in any cruising guides, very few boats visit. If your boat draws less than 2 meters (Migration is a trimaran that draws 1.5), you can enter the tiny protected ‘harbor’ at the village. It wasn’t the depth as much as the width that provided the excitement here. We had about a meter on each side to spare. But once in, we were well protected from the strong trade winds which blew hard across the lagoon for several days. – Migration

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.

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 Fangataufu are off limits). —Charlie’s Charts

3.6.2 Cruiser Reports

2008: Pauline, a student we’d met in the 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 the 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 – SE TO NW

A typical trip through the NW Tuamotus for cruisers going from the Marquesas to Tahiti:

![Map of Tuamotus islands](image)

**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, Internet, 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).
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.

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°37.65’ / 143°34.3W. The anchorage off the town at Makemo (just inside the E pass) is not very 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 (new) concrete pier, and 2 stern lines out to coral heads behind us (an anchor would work too). 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 Other Anchorages

Jan. 2019: 16°36.2427’ S; 143°38.5376’ W. 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°29.4660’ / 143°49.5890’ W. 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

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

Sept. 2018: 16°26.596’ / 143°56.971’ W. 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°39.35’ / 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

2010: 16°42.85’ / 143°28.1 W. Also anchored at in milder conditions. – Visions of Johanna

April 2010: 16°31.15’ / 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.

16°27.215’ / 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). – Visions of Johanna

4.2.2.3 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 in February 2017. Most of the bommies are indicated spot on but I found several that were not.

I estimated the position of the bommies while passing by them so these coordinates are not perfect but should be within 200 ft. Keep an eye out.
16 27.768S 143 55.449W
16 28.018S 143 54.443W
16 28.897S 143 53.512W
16 29.014S 143 53.255W
16 33.123S 143 47.789W
16 35.069S 143 43.950W
16 35.630S 143 43.028W
16 35.968S 143 42.711W
16 37.318S 143 40.055W
16 37.386S 143 40.053W
16 37.530S 143 39.731W
16 38.006S 143 29.761W
16 37.98 4S 143 28.322W
16 38.608S 143 25.055W

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 will be a spotter from the bow and we
will communicate with a hand held VHF to point out any obstacles. The bommies are easy to see with the sun
behind you. I navigate using the plotter and have binoculars in hand to spot what is charted and look out for
bommies that are not. –Shindig

*Ed note: Anyone navigating inside atolls should be using Google Earth charts and “Mark I Eyeballs”. NONE of
the chart plotting offerings are spot on all the time.*

### 4.2.3 Yachtsman 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)

**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**

**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

**July 2010:** We were shocked to find that the Post Office would not change either US Dollars or Euros for us—and there is no bank (Other places, like Fakarava and Gambiers, the Post Office readily changed US dollars in fairly large amounts). However, the big store accepted Dollars and changed some extra for us. s/v Infini also reported that the store did a cash advance on their Visa card for them. – Soggy Paws

4.2.4.3 **Hardware Supplies**

**Nov. 2019:** Located across from Opareke Market. Small selection of hardware & home goods. – Sugar Shack

4.2.4.4 **Laundry**

**Nov. 2019:** Laverie +689 87 243 404. Same road as Opareke Market closer to water. – Sugar Shack

4.2.4.5 **Le Mairie**

**Nov. 2019:** +689 40 980 255. Located near poste and police. Right from dinghy dock, past artisan market.

4.2.4.6 **Police / Gendarmerie**

**Nov. 2019:** +689 87 276 589. Located near poste.

4.2.4.7 **Post Office**


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**
• **Opareke Market**
  o +689 40 980 218
  o 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 3rd gate on the left.
  o Mon-Fri: 0600-1300 & 1530-1830. Sat: 0600-12 & 1530-1830. Sun: 0600-12
  o 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**
  o +689 40 980 247 or +689 87 783 408
  o Located on the first street parallel to the water. One block up, turn left and 2-3 blocks down on right side.
  o Mon-Sat: 0530-1200 & 1500-1830.
  o You can order baguettes, croissants and bread the day before with Noeline or the owner.

• **Magasin Thomas**
  o +689 40 980 361 or +689 40 980 312
  o Located right on the wharf.
  o Mon-Sat: 0630-12 & 1600-1800. Sunday 0700-12

• **Magasin Chez Tupana**
  o Located on Moturama motu (just past windfarm).
  o They sell propane and sometimes refill.

• **Magasin Florence**
  o +689 40 980 376
  o Location: Road between Le Maire, cross main road, on left at next intersection.
+689 98 03 76 also offers a snack shop.
- Located on the street east of the main church.

- **Veggie Farm**
  - +689 40 980 216
  - Located near magasin Toa Mauiri (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.

**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. 500fpf 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 the bakery is very good, serves large portions and reasonably priced.
  - 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

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 "Punaruku Plage/Punaruku Beach Pearls - Makemo" operation. This was not evident when we were in Punaruku, but maybe operates sometimes. – Kokopeli

2009: Though the Makemo village anchorage has little to recommend it, both the east and west ends of the atoll are beautiful. We found excellent snorkeling. – Migration

2008: One of the amazing things about Makemo was the fishing. We'd heard about a nice anchorage about half way down the atoll, so we eventually left the village, unrolled some jib, and drifted down the lagoon. Since this was our first sail inside one of these lagoons, we kept a sharp lookout as we could see coral heads just under the surface. We passed some of these quite close by, and realized that they must come almost straight up from the bottom, as our depth sounder would give us no warning of an approaching coral head. Coral just under the surface is easy to see if the sun is shining brightly, but this day was full of clouds and even a few squalls, which cut visibility to almost nothing. Nevertheless, we put a couple fishing lines out, as we always do when day-sailing. Over the next hour, we pulled in 3 fat tuna-type fish, which yielded something like 20 lbs of boneless fillets. We hadn't had such good fishing before (or since).

We wanted to have supper ashore at one of the little food shacks, but were shocked to learn that no one sold fish. The only offerings were Steak Frite (steak and fries) for CFP1000 (about US$10). We contented ourselves with boat food every night and then went ashore to see the dancing. They were dancing not only for their own
island competition, but to choose a group to represent them later in July at the large festival on Fakarava. – Ocelot

**2003-Diving:** The West pass at Makemo is excellent and the walls outside are spectacular. Anchoring is difficult near the west pass with coral heads coming up 15 feet off the bottom to grab your anchor whichever way you swing (please buoy your anchor!!!). The walls were better than the pass and we found the south wall the best. Lots of large pelagic fish here—tuna weighing two hundred pounds, silky sharks and two 60 lb. Cubera snappers that followed us one entire dive like lost puppies. – From an SSCA Article

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**

Taengo has one pass called Passe Tiritepakau.

There is a pass into the lagoon of this atoll but it 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:**

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.

**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-slash, 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 many boats had stopped ahead of us and there were about 10-12 boats in the lagoon at the time we arrived.

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The pass is very straightforward, 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 outflowing current.

Keep in mind that if you have a choice, 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.

April 2010: 16 01.009' S / 142 27.70' W. We floated around here, to enter the atoll when there was slack tide. There are very good markers that mark the course of 90.7 degrees, which set it up nicely. Good channel markers. The entrance was easy and we really enjoyed it there. Raroia was very nice and the locals were very friendly.

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.

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.

4.5.2.2 Kon Tiki Anchorage

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.

Aug. 2016: 16-03.869' S / 142-21.568' W. 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 hoa's 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. 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 deepo. 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. Saw one 4’ grey shark as we were checking out the anchor.

**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 approximately 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 Rarioa: 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 with visible buoys and some submerged without any markers!
- **16-06.26S / 142-22.67W** Nice anchorage, good protection, pretty spot
- **16-08.34S / 142-23.56W** Nice anchorage, good protection, pretty spot.
April 2010: 16 02.327S / 142 28.184W. Very beautiful anchorage and lots of black tipped sharks. The morning we left there was at least 5 swimming around our boat. – Pursuit IV

4.5.3 Yachtsman Services

4.5.3.1 Fuel (Diesel / Gasoline)

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

4.5.4 General Services

4.5.4.1 Wifi

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

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

4.5.6 Activities

4.5.6.1 Diving and Snorkeling

April 2016: Nice Snorkeling Bommies (nothing compares to snorkeling the pass but still contained 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

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 Raroia, 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:
- 16-03.875 / 142-21.546 The Kon-Tiki Monument (inland on island)
- 16-03.875 / 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 easily 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.

We did not go ashore at the Pearl Farm. Another cruiser told us they had met them on approach in an outboard, and let them on a safe track through the pearl buoys. And they were not unfriendly, they were just not overly friendly.
We had already 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

**June 2010:** We had a nice conversation on VHF with a boat passing by who’s name I don’t remember. They spent a week or so in Rarioa. They anchored off the village (a little s of the pass), and then picked their way across the atoll to the east side—not hard they said. They spent a few days there and then came back and anchored near the pass ready to go out in the morning. There a local couple stopped by–they live on the island that is on the north side of the pass. This boat ended up staying there a few days and diving and snorkeling in and around the pass with the locals. – Soggy Paws

**June 2010:** We spent 3 weeks in Rarioa. The people in the town very friendly, especially Regis and Tatiana, who live in a small bungalow near the airport. Many people in Rarioa speak English, so that was nice for us. The locals told us that we could eat the fish inside the lagoon on the east side of the atoll, so we fished from the boats and caught and ate grouper and ‘sweet lips’, a light-colored snapper type with an orange throat. We used clams and fish for bait. – Australia 31 / Pincoya

**2003-Diving:** The Raroai pass dive is one of the best pass dives in the Tuamotus and we dove it quite a few times. We saw from 50-150 sharks on every dive as well as 4-foot groupers, tuna, large parrotfish and many smaller species. We also had excellent diving on the walls outside the pass. – From an SSCA Article

### 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

**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 went on exploring. It is a deep channel (5 meters at the entrance, around 15 inside) around 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 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.

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
4.8.2  Cruiser Reports

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 seldom occupied. 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.

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, but the easiest pass to enter and exit is the center pass called Passe Teavatapu. The Northern pass is called Passe Motupuapua and the Southern pass is called Passe D’Otao.

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.

4.9.2.1 Pass Anchorages

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 much float your chain to avoid getting wrapped around a coral head. – Sugar Shack

Sept. 2019: 16.51.2552S / 144.41.0291W. 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 – Soggy Paws

May 2010: 16°51.S155 / 144°39.84W. A 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.

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.

16.57.235 / 144.34.81W dropped in 3.2 meters of beautiful, solid holding sand on our 2nd 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 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 TAH6 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).

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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. – Fellow Traveller

16-57.05N and 144-44.16W. This spot mentioned by Soggy Paws and indeed could be a good place to ride out a ‘shoaling’ 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 Traveller

4.9.2.3 “7” Anchorage

2018: 16.57.1146S / 144.44.5333W. Found a shallow spot (2.8 meters) sandy bottom that was a bouncy anchorage as it was unprotected. Known as the “7” anchorage because the GE image is a “7” – Sugar Shack

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 SE corner and then back to the pass. – Jacaranda

2019: 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

2017: We anchored in 3 meters and a used couple of anchor floats for the tiniest of bommies. We floated the chain, and there was some protection on both sides with good access. Some of the reef dries out at low tide. Both sides provide good access to the closest motu which has good binding. – Sugar Shack
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 16°59.04 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°54.479' 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

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. However, we have seen the mantas on the south side. 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. 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.

Teavatatapu pass: 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. After a few days we relocated to anchor in the lee of the motu between the middle and east passes. Also nice, and secure.

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

May 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. – Soggy Paws

2003: We did several dives on the walls outside Teavatapu pass as well as a drift dive in the pass. Our favorite was the wall to the east of the pass. On one pass dive we started during the last 15 minutes of the incoming tide. Slack tide lasted 5 minutes and 10 minutes after the tide change the outgoing current was raging and there were 8-foot standing waves in the pass entrance. In this case surfacing IMMEDIATELY is essential to avoid being swept out the pass where the dinghy would have great difficulty finding you. – From an SSCA Article

4.9.3.2 Hiking

Sept. 2019: Walking around at the “7” anchorage, 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

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

Oct. 2010: There was a big yellow ‘go-fast’ Cigarette boat that arrived when we were there. It looked like they had tourists aboard (about 10 people total) for an overnight visit to the island. They said they had come from Page 99
Fakarava. One person on board said he was a policemen or park ranger, and asked where we had come from. He checked the passports for each of the 3 boats there, for a proper entry stamp. (note, this is the only check anyone did anywhere we’ve been in the Tuamotus).

When we talked to them ashore and asked about the water, they invited us to use some (for laundry). They also handed us each (boat) a fresh baguette!

A few days later...For the whole time we have been here, only our 3 cruising boats have been here. There was another boat (a large private yacht) that came in and anchored right by the pass for 2-3 nights during the stormy weather, but as soon as the weather cleared, they left. And they never went anywhere else but that one anchorage by the pass.

We have been shellin and enjoying walking the beach. And we actually walked around the whole island, and explored the shallow windward lagoon between the motu and the reef (where we could go lobster walking at night, if we wanted to).

There is no one living here on this atoll. It has been turned into a park, so there are no permanent habitations and no pearl farms. We saw a ‘park ranger’ come by via speedboat from a neighboring atoll when we first got here. He welcomed us to use the water in the cistern next to the block building at the east pass, which is normally unoccupied. He said he visits Tahanea about once a month to check on things. He and a few friends stayed overnight and left the next morning. The only formalities, when he was here, was to look at our passports to make sure we had cleared in to French Polynesia somewhere else.

Note that even “uninhabited” motus are owned by someone, and they come periodically to harvest the coconuts for copra, so do not take their coconuts!

John on s/v Nakia has an intriguing Google Earth photo of the lagoon, and the 3/4 of the lagoon we have NOT explored looks very inviting. With a few days of settled weather, we could explore the whole atoll inside the rim, and try to find a location that has perfect protection from the occasional weather systems.

We were especially looking at a spot at 16-57N and 144-34.6W, where a spit of coral comes way off the surrounding rim into the lagoon. If an anchorage could be found on both sides of that spit, by moving once, you could get almost complete 360-degree protection. But we never checked this out.

Heading West to Fakarava: The distance is such that we can’t easily make it daylight and in the 12 hours imposed by the requirement to enter and leave lagoons at slack current. This was an easy overnight. In very calm weather, though, we learned, you don’t need perfect slack to come and go, even from Fakarava S. Pass.

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)

Re- the sandpiper, ditto ‘Australia 31’ comment, we only saw it on the 3 motus south of the anchorage they describe. There was also a PhD student from Canada camped on one of the motus on the far south side of the atoll studying these birds. As for other birds there are many nesting and inhabiting all the eastern motus we visited including the atoll fruit dove. -- Narma

June 2010: We saw the very rare Tuamotu Sandpiper (the reason the atoll is a park) on the east side of the atoll. They are brown, with barred ‘underpants’ and dirty yellow legs. They have a shorter beak than most sandpipers and eat insects rather than sea life. They are usually located up on the beach near the vegetation, rather than in the surf zone.

We also went to the 3 motus in the middle of Tahanea, where we found nesting frigate birds. The frigate babies were just amazing. We did not find a good anchoring spot, but left someone aboard with the boat while 2 of us went ashore in the dinghy. -- Australia 31
4.10 Faaité (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

Faaité has one pass called Passe Teporioha.

2008: Easy, well-marked pass. -- Sloepmouche

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.

The wind direction didn’t allow us to anchor inside the lagoon so we spent the night just outside the pass. — Migration

The described 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 ½ mile away from the village. The lagoon is reported difficult to navigate because of the numerous pearl farm stations! — Sloepmouche

4.10.3 Activities

4.10.3.1 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
4.10.4 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:

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:
- Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia, 2001, pg 69

4.12.1 Pass

Kauehi has one pass called Passe 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 Guesstimator" 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

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.

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 Hieta - 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

Sept. 2018: Jacaranda – September 2018: 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.

May 2016: We anchored in two locations at this atoll. – Starry Horizons

- 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.

June 2011: We anchored in two locations. – Yolo

- 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.


2010: The lagoon is deep with a clear run from the pass to the village. supplies & airport. Village anchorage is exposed in se winds, but more shelter can be found to the north of the village, but it is a bit of a long walk in 0.5 mile. Watch out for pearl farms in the lagoon. most are quite deep. – White Princess

2008: 15-57’.47S / 145-04.63W. The water is crystal clear and bright blue. The motus behind which we sit are bright white sand topped by waving palm trees while the ocean waves break on the outside just beyond. The wind is steady across the reef, enabling our wind generator to finally do its thing, yet the boat sits as steady as if tied to a dock! – Tackless II
4.12.3 Yachtsman 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 and use the fresh water at the warehouse location. – Yolo

4.12.4 General Services

4.12.4.1 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

4.12.4.2 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

4.12.4.3 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
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).
- There is no bakery, but 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: If you face the church and turn right, go several hundred meters and turn left at the first gravel road, you will see the only village store on your right. – 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 potential anchorage location 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 / 14503.328 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. When you walk down the wharf towards the church you will see a large steel trash barrel near the first building (a copra warehouse). Between the warehouse and the church, you will see a large black fresh water container. According to the village "Policeman" cruisers can drop off their trash and use the fresh water at the warehouse location.

The road in front of the church is concrete for several blocks in each direction. If you face the church and turn left (north) and go several hundred meters you will see the village government, police, and postal service offices on your right. If you face the church and turn right, go several hundred meters and turn left at the first gravel road, you will see the only village store on your right.

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.

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:


4.14 Anaa (No Pass)
Guide Books:
4.15 Fakarava (Pass, Supplies, Vilalge, Wifi ATM)

Guide Books:
- South Pacific Anchorages: Warwick Clay, 2nd ed; page 27
- 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 section for easy download).
- Any fish/crabs/lobster are ONLY for consumption within the Atoll.
- 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.
- There is a very small tourist fee to pay (As of June 2017 it was minimal 55CPF per person / per night)
4.15.1 Passes

There are two passes in Fakarava.

- The North pass, Passe Garuae, is near the town of Rotaova, which has typical small-town services.
- The South pass, Passe Tumakohua, is about 25 miles south, and has almost no services, but great diving. There are several anchorage places between the two main anchoring locations.

Nov. 2019: We arrived Fakarava at 1900 and had no choice but to heave to and wait for sunrise. We entered 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

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.

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

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

Passe Nord
- 145°41’51.63” W, 16°04’29.71” S
- 145°41’39.03” W, 16°04’52.70” S

Aeroport
- 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. This warning does NOT include Pakakota Yacht Services in Fakarava, who DOES maintain their moorings. – 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 Tuamotu 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 South Pass Anchorage**

**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 coal 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.
USE EXTREME CARE when using the moorings in N & S Fakarava, Kauhi 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. This warning does NOT include Pakakota Yacht Services, who DOES maintain their moorings – Jacaranda

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 the changes to us. – 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 easily seen in reasonable 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 6-30.293S 145-28.542W. 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 ¼ of a mile longer than anchoring in the coral on the N side of the pass. – Soggy Paws

4.15.2.3 Pakakota Yacht Services Anchorage

Located at: 16°13.528 S / 145°33.413 W

See Cruiser Reports for more information on this anchorage.
Sept. 2019: Pakokotoa had several available mooring balls that we had heard were maintained well. We grabbed one, snorkeled on it and found it to be in good condition. We have a rather large dinghy and outboard which makes beaching her difficult. The only other way to get to shore was a dilapidated dock that required a bow and stern tie to avoid hitting coral. – Sugar Shack

Oct. 2018: Between the north and the south ends of the island we came down the marked channel near the east side motus. Stayed overnight at on a mooring at Pakakota, very nice and hospitable. 145 deg 33.413 min W, 016 deg 13.528 min S. Best wifi (free with a beer) we’ve found north of the Societies. Even reaches the boats on the moorings, without an on-board booster. – Kokopeli

Oct. 2016: Leaving the Boat at Fakarava for 2 Months: We were keen to leave our boat in the Tuamotus when we returned to the UK for 2 months. Our draft of 2.2 meters and tonnage of 20,000 make us too large to be hauled out at Apataki and so we explored other options.

Although we were still in the “hurricane” season, provided the boat is on a mooring, we are insured. On the advice of yachtie friends we decided to leave the yacht (Amel 54) on a mooring at Pakokota Yacht Services under the superb care of Matthieu and Agnes.

Matthieu speaks excellent English, has a yacht of his own, and skippers a 60ft charter catamaran around the Society Islands and Tuamotu Atolls in the season. He is thus superbly qualified to take care of any boat.

Matthieu could not have done enough for us. He put down a heavy-duty screw anchor mooring for us, which will hold the boat up to around 50 knots. Whilst we were away, he moved the boat to the village to protect it in a storm of around 35 knots, and brought it back safely to the Pakokota mooring. – Asolare

May 2016: 16°13.871 S / 145°33.505 W. We made one stop midway down the atoll. We anchored in sand with a few coral heads around. We snorkeled the nearby point, with lots of coral heads and fish. (Jacaranda says that this is near Pakokota) – Starry Horizons

2010: 16°30.295 S / 145°27.37 W. 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

4.15.2.4 Other Anchorages

May 2018: Motu Hirifa: (by Fulvio formerly sv Bulbo Matto). 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 – Daisho

May 2011: 16°17.425 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 Kaukuraroa. 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. – Slipaway

4.15.2.5 Passage Between the North and South Pass

The passage from North or South or vice versa is pretty easy. There are large markers marking the way (placed ON large coral heads). There are a number of places to anchor up and down the lee side of the east side of Fakarava.

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. The few merchants also enabled us to secure warm bread, fresh vegetables, and a few other items. Instead of rushing down the channel between Rotoava and the south pass, we decided to spend a few days enjoying the shoreline anchorages.

**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 degrees 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 degrees and 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.

**Hirifa. 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 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

**2010:** In a strong blow from the E, when we went to the SW side of the pass, a few other boats went to Hirifa, ENE of the South Pass, at approximately 16-26.95 / 145-21.9W. They reported by VHF that this was a nice sheltered spot in east winds.

**Out in the Middle:** In 2010, 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 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

**4.15.3 Yachtsman Services**

**4.15.3.1 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.
- **Fakarava Yacht Services** (Aldric and Stepahnie) Hours: Mon-Sat: 0800-1700. Closed Sundays. Email: [fakayachtservices@gmail.com](mailto:fakayachtservices@gmail.com)  +689 87 75 34 84 or +40 98 41 72. fakatachtservices.com. VHF 77
- **Pakokota Yacht Services** (Matthieu and Agness) +689.87.799.526 / +689 87.747.118 pakokotayachtservices.com and [pakokotayachtservices@gmail.com](mailto:pakokotayachtservices@gmail.com) VHF 72 & 16
4.15.3.2 Fuel (Diesel / Gasoline)

Sept. 2019: The Total Gas Station at Quay sells diesel and gasoline. In addition, Pakokota Yacht Services (Matthieu and Agness) +689.87.799.526 / +689 87.747.118 or VHF 72 & 16. 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: The new service station located at the dock is not pumping fuel as of May 1st. They are awaiting a final sign off from Papeete. When that happens, you will be able to 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. — Sugar Shack

Dec. 2018: We found that there was no fuel available here and the next supply ship (low season) only comes once a month with fuel, so its 25 days to they have fuel again at the dock. — Nehenehe

4.15.3.3 Fakarava Yacht Services (North Pass)

See Cruiser Reports for additional information on Services

Sept. 2019: Aldric and Stephanie. VHF 77, +689 87 75 34 84 or +689 40 98 41 72. Hours: Mon-Sat: 0800-1700. Closed Sundays. fakayachtservices@gmail.com fakatachtservices.com. 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) – Sugar Shack

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, at 2000xfp 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. fakayachtservices@gmail.com Channel #77, +689 87 75 34 84 – Starry Horizons

4.15.3.4 Pakokota Yacht Services (10 miles south of North Pass)

See Cruiser Reports for additional information on Services. Location: 16°13.528 S / 145°33.413 W


Oct. 2016: Matthieu speaks excellent English, has a yacht of his own, and skippers a 60ft charter catamaran around the Society Islands and Tuamotu Atolls in the season. He is thus superbly qualified to take care of any boat. – Asolare

Rates As of 2016:

- Wifi Internet (good signal in the anchorage) - FREE for customers, purchase water/beer
- Moorings - FREE
- Laundry – 800F/load for "simple" or 1200F/load for "dry and folded" [Note: Nicole says she did the best we've seen in FP]
- Gaz fill (butane) - 400/Kg
- Transport to/from town: maximum 3 people - 1000 total and includes stops at stores, etc.
- Diesel is available on site 150F ltr.
2010: The Yachtsman’s Guide says fuel is available in Rotoava in barrels of 200L. In actuality, if you want to buy fuel, you have to buy it directly off the supply boat when it comes in. Get there as soon as they are tied up, and take cash (CFP). Some of the supply boats will sell to you by the liter, others will only sell in 200L barrels, and they want the barrels back before they leave. Arrange a group of yachtsies to make a 200L barrel before the boat comes in, just in case. – Soggy Paws

4.15.3.5 Trash and Recycling

Nov. 2019: 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. 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

4.15.4 General Yacht Services

4.15.4.1 Air Tahiti
Air Tahiti has an office. From quay, turn right. Sign indicates where you turn left to reach office.

4.15.4.2 Bank / ATM
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

4.15.4.3 Laundry
Sept. 2019: Both Fakarava Yacht Services and Pakokota Yacht Services offer laundry services. See above for contact information.

May 2019: Fakarava Yacht Services: Kudo's to Stephanie for the excellent laundry service - Our clothes came back very clean and folded – Jacaranda

4.15.4.4 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.

4.15.4.5 Medical Center
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

4.15.4.6 Post Office
2019: Poste Hours: 0730-1130 & 1500-1730. Near Total Gas Station. 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

4.15.4.7 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

4.15.4.8 Wifi
Sept. 2019: The following locations offer wifi services:
- Fakarava Yacht Services offers internet for customers (8mbs)
- Pakokota Yacht Services (Matthieu and Agness) free with purchase.
- Tourism office offers free wifi during business hours. Located near quay and police station. North 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

4.15.5 Provisions
- Tumoana Market Hours: Mon-Sat 0730-1700. (Total Gas Station at dock). Decent market with some fishing gear, clothing, oil, etc..
- 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. Speaks English & eager to please.
• **Fakadelices** Located on ocean street ½ mile past FYS. Only takes cake orders, no bakery services (2019).

• **Fruit stand** near Te Ava Dive

**2016:** Sofie is the vegetable lady in Fakarava. Sofie fakafaapu@hotmail.fr +689 87 32 56 78 She runs a small store, located across from Top Dive, that is open from 8-2pm. The service she provides is very unique. If you are headed to Fakarava North and know about when you will arrive chances are you will be completely out of fresh veggies. Send her an email or phone her ahead of time with your order. She will respond when the next ship is due to arrive. She will then either email you or send you a text message when your order is ready. How cool is that!! We arrived the day the ship came in and she had our order ready the following morning. Prices are similar to the 2 grocery stores. – Jacaranda

**2016:** Provisioning is decent here - I bought the first gala apples I’d seen since the Galapagos in Magasin Rotoava. Thee 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
4.15.6 Restaurants

Sept. 2019: We came across several snacks and a closed restaurant. See below. – Sugar Shack

- **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.
- **Rotoava Grill**: From quay, turn right, on right hand side. Hours: Mon-Sat: 1100-1400. Sat & Sun: 1800-2100. +689 87.76.80.76
- **Pension Teramau** (Annabelle’s Place) offers lunch
- **Pakokota Yacht Services** (lunch and dinner) order 6-8 hours in advance
- **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. All you can eat pizza 2500fr or dinner 3500fr. Will have wifi by Nov/Dec 2019.

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. Paillotte (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

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

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

May 2011: Pension Tetamanu (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

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

Hirifa - 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

4.15.7 Activities

4.15.7.1 Diving and Snorkeling

- Top Dive (North Pass) [www.topdive.pf]
- Top Dive (South Pass) +689 70.99.33 and VHF 9
- Fakarava Dive Center (S. end) small and personal. [www.fakarava-diving-center.com]
- Te Ava Nui Dive (N. end) divingfakarava.com.  [www.divingfakarava.com](http://www.divingfakarava.com)
- Renata Diving (Hirifa South pass) operator: Mattius +689 87.70.15.08
- Te Tamanu Dive Center (south pass) offers beers and 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

Oct. 2019:  South Pass Dive shop:  [Tetamanu Village](http://www.tetamanuvillage.pf/us/dive.htm).  We heard that they would fill tanks, but when we asked, the one worker we found said he did not have the correct fitting.

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](http://www.tetamanuvillage.pf/us/dive.htm), they were great!  Located north of the town’s main wharf.  At the south pass, we did drift dives with Mattius of  [Enata Diving](http://www.tetamanuvillage.pf/us/dive.htm), phone number +689 87 70 15 08.  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 dingedhi 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 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

4.15.7.2 Points of Interest

- Sept. 2018: Kite Spot – Great kite spot at the E corner of the Fakara 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
- 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

4.15.7.3 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.

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

2019 verified (2005): Havaiki Pearl Farm and Guest House (www.havaiki.com). This pretty guest house sits at a turn in the road south of the village, with its pearl dock reaching out into the azure water of the lagoon. It is operated by a young German, Joachim, who married Havaiki, a local girl and they offer visitors the chance to dive for your own pearl oyster, a fun sort of gamble where you “pays your money and takes your chance” that the oyster you pick will have a perfect $100 pearl inside instead of a bumpy lumpy reject! A number of the cruising gals indulged while we were out diving, and at least one came up a winner. For those who don't want to get wet, Joachim also has a nice display in his guest house where you can simply pick out that perfect pearl already set into a necklace. The black pearls of the Tuamotus are not exclusively black. The colors range from gray, to green, to blue, to lavender, to champagne. There were some tempting items, and some francs changed hands, but when all was said and done I refrained. Jewelry just isn't a place I need to spend our money. – Tackless II

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


4.15.8 Cruiser Reports

Feb. 2019: We looked into leaving our boat for a few weeks with Pakakota Yacht Services watching over it in our absence. Mathieu seems like a really solid guy, who we would be confident would make good decisions on our behalf. Unfortunately (for us!), he only provides that service during the “high” season. During the cyclone season (November-March), he instead works on other projects around his own property. He told us that he found that watching after boats took most of his time and interfered with his ability to get those other projects done. So he splits the year between the two roles rather than doing both inadequately.

He suggested that we contact a friend of his in Tahiti who has started watching boats in Baie Phaeton. We did, and found Marc to be responsible and competent. He is looking after more than 20 boats now! He gave us periodic email updates. He speaks English well, and has a long history with boats. He and his daughter make a good team! His email: marcusgrandus@hotmail.fr. There is a small marina here, but most of the boats are anchored in this big bay with a thick mud bottom. It appears to be a good hurricane hole as well! – Lungta

Dec. 2018: We moved down to Pakokota Yacht services and wow--this place is fantastic. I can’t say enough good things about the folks who run this place.

We noticed a trough/convergence zone will be directly over us for Christmas and maybe Boxing Day. There has been thunder and lightning throughout the day, maybe about 4 to eight miles away, as many as four squalls on the horizon and 32 kn winds.

We got out of Rotoava because it’s been since Oct.2017 since the moorings there were serviced and when we set our anchor…. We felt too much coral. We have only touched coral once (with our anchor chain) in the last year of cruising by picking our spots carefully. With our 23” draft; We are used to anchoring in around 8-15 feet of water or at most 30 feet and I can dive on the anchor at that depth. I couldn’t easily find a spot at Rotoava to do this.

Then we heard such great things about Pakokota YS... and the moorings being serviced very frequently that we just headed down here. The winds look like they could really pick up in the next 24 hours and we had 32 knot winds on the sail down here and about 100-foot visibility for a short time. Now that I am here, I am very glad we moved. – Nehenehe

May 2018: I would like to confirm how great and helpful people are Mattieu and Agnes of Pokokota Yacht Service in Fakarava. Good food, friendly atmosphere, any problem tackled and solved if any chance is possible. Mattieu really got me out of a heavy engine/contract problem on rented Daisho. – Daisho

Oct. 2016: Pakokota Yacht Services under the superb care of Matthieu and Agnes. Matthieu speaks excellent English, has a yacht of his own, and skippers a 60ft charter catamaran around the Society Islands and Tuamotu Atolls in the season. He is thus superbly qualified to take care of any boat.

Matthieu could not have done enough for us. He put down a heavy-duty screw anchor mooring for us, which will hold the boat up to around 50 knots. Whilst we were away, he moved the boat to the village to protect it in a storm of around 35 knots, and brought it back safely to the Pakokota mooring.

He and Agnes helped us with so much. Agnes did food shopping for us so when we returned, we had some provisions on the boat. They both drove us into the village for provisioning when required. Agnes cooks excellent food in their “home” restaurant, which is a pleasure especially a few days before we left and when we had so much to do. On top of this, PYS has the best wifi in the Tuamotus – free of charge to all customers – and to be a customer, all you need to do is have a beer in their little bar!

We had a problem with our main inverter, which needed replacing. Matthieu (with his excellent French) sourced one in Papeete, had it flown to Fakarava, collected it from the airport and then installed it. He is knowledgeable with electronic equipment, and so to have the inverter working again is a joy. We needed our refrigerators and deepfreezes re-gassed, and again Matthieu found someone in the village, who came to the boat with the right equipment and did it.
Without Matthieu’s help we would have had to return to Papeete for these repairs, which we really did not want to do until later in the season.

Pakokota Yacht Services is a real little gem in Fakarava and in the Tuamoto Attols. We would not hesitate to recommend PYS to any yachts that want to leave their boat to return home or are too large to be hauled out, especially now that there is at least one heavy duty mooring available! – Asolare

July 2016: Linda and I have had a couple meals at Pakokota. Both times we ate family style with Agnes and Matthieu along with his family that was visiting. Both meals were very good. We encourage cruisers to support Pakokota Yacht Club by having dinner there. Arrange 24 hours in advance. – Jacaranda

July 2016: There is an operation called Pakokota Yacht Services (different from Fakarava Yacht Services) that is owned by the same family that runs the Pakokota Lodge. Their names are Matthieu (sounds like Matthew) and Agnes. Nice people. It is also known as Pakokota Yacht Club.

Pakokota is located just off the marked channel approximately 10nm south of Rotoava (the town on the north end of Fakarava) at 16°13.528 S / 145°33.413 W.

Matthieu is a sailor and understands our needs. He recently worked as captain of a local 60' live-aboard dive catamaran operating in the Tuamotus and he is an avid offshore fisherman. He is a wealth of information on diving and sailing in the atolls. Previously in the "real world" he worked as a signal engineer in Tahiti/Moorea and as a professional diver (divemaster and commercial diving). He speaks excellent English.

They have four FREE moorings rated to 20 tons (they plan to install two more in a few weeks.) The moorings are deep sand screw professionally installed and appear to be in excellent condition.

Aside from the moorings there is enough room for at least a dozen more boats to anchor. 2530' sand bottom with a few widely scattered small bommies. Similar bottom as Hirifa. The anchorage is situated in a shallow indentation in the coastline that offers excellent protection from NE to SE, possibly even S as there is a sand point on the southern end.

The shoreline is beautiful, wild, and undeveloped with trees that help block the wind.

There is a dock and an easy sandy/shelly beach to land your dinghy.

The lodge currently consists of 3 small bungalows and a bar/restaurant that is open to cruisers

They are available to watch your boat if you must leave FP. Fakarava has regular flights in/out and they can drive you to the airport. As I mentioned Matthieu is a professional captain and sailor and your boat will be secured to one of their moorings.

For 1000 F Nicole, myself, and Sylvia (SV Cinnabar) hired Matthieu to take us into town for provision. He took us to two magasins (including one near the lodge where we filled our gasoline jugs for 200/L), a local who sells bananas, a woman with a large vegetable garden, and the post office. He translated, helped us find what we needed, etc. For a half days work we ended up with plenty of fresh veggies including fresh broccoli, mangoes, a giant stalk of bananas, the usual other food stuff, laundry finished, gasoline jugs filled, etc. If we wanted we could have also done a butane fill and purchased diesel. All while anchored along a beautiful wild stretch of coastline with good free wifi and only two other boats.

You can see why we feel comfortable strongly recommending a stop here if you're stopping in Fakarava and need any of the above. – Naoma

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. – Nakia

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

2010: Today was one of those days that started off with promise, deteriorated in weather conditions that sucked, and ended up in the discovery of a place not even mentioned in the guides. We had departed the north anchorage of Fakarava for what was to have been an uneventful motor sail down to the south pass anchorage. About a third of the way down the wind picked up until it blew 22 knots on our nose, accompanied by a short two foot chop that would have been OK, but the tide changed against us and we were doing about 1.5 knots over ground. Dark clouds were scudding past and it was obvious we weren't going to make our destination.

We had previously anchored in a spot mentioned in Bonnette's "Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia" but I recalled a beautiful small sandy beach cove nearby that anchorage that looked enticing, so we turned around and took another hour to get to that spot. What a great place. 16-15.558S / 145-32.851W.

We dropped anchor in 31' of sand, there weren't too many bommies, and we listened to the wind howl in the rigging. The most I saw in one of the many squalls that poured rain on us was 33 knots, but we were snug and secure behind a small promontory of land that protected us from the NE winds in the squalls, without uncomfortable swell. We spent a very pleasant night in a beautiful spot; -- Infini

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

4.16.1 Pass

Aratika has one pass called Passe Tamaketa.

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’.

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: This atoll has 2 passes, one east and the other west, both towards the north of the atoll. 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 & beaconed, 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 it’s 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

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.

Sept. 2018: 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. This warning does NOT include Pakakota Yacht Services in Fakarava, who DOES maintain their moorings. – Jacaranda

Aug. 2018: Town has a small Breakwater that gives a sheltered tie-up. We stayed there for 3 days. Its depth is 2 Metres on the inside of the breakwater. It would pay to check it out by tender before you went in. – Caos

2010: Shelter can be found along the N & E coasts, and also behind the reef just inside the W pass in settled conditions. – White Princess

4.16.3 Provisions

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

4.16.4 Cruiser Reports

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 89561550 – Caos

2010: The village is in the middle of the north motu, with the airport about 1m to the east. There appears to be a small harbour by the village--look for the radio tower. There are pearl farms. – White Princess

4.17 Toau / Anse Amyot (Pass)

There is a pass in Toau. However, there is a good alternate anchorage at the false pass of Anse Amyot.

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.”
- Charlie’s Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 82-83
Toau is a day sail from Fakarava. There is a pass to go in the lagoon in the SE side of the atoll. But most boats go to Anse Amyot on the NW side. (See picture below)

Anse Amyot is a ‘false pass’ with no access to the lagoon, and NO current issues—it is very easy to navigate.

4.17.1 Pass

Toau has one pass called Passe Fakatahuna and one “false pass” called Anse Amyot.

4.17.1.1 Anse Amyot (False Pass)

You can see why Anse Amyot is a false pass. A reef blocks the inner passage into the lagoon

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

2010: North end of Toau, good harbor, entered from OUTSIDE the fringing reef. Said to be flat in almost all conditions. Easy to enter with ranges (lights) and marks. Mooring balls available but plenty of room to anchor. You cannot go into the lagoon through this hole... it is a blind pass with a coral bar at the inner end. – Mr. John

4.17.1.2 Pass Otuigi

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 Anse Amyot Anchorage and Moorings

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 500. — 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 ¼” 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.

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.

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 only 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 Toau – Inside Lagoon Anchorage

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

4.17.3 Yachtsman Services

4.17.3.1 Fuel (Diesel / Gasoline)

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

2010: Sometimes Gaston may be able to arrange for fuel if you need it, but do not count on it. Sometimes it may be possible to get a few supplies, if they make a run in their speedboat to Apataki or Fakarava, but do not count on it. – Soggy Paws

4.17.4 General Services

4.17.4.1 Wifi

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

2008: The supply boat Cobia only visits Toau once a month, coming to the lagoon at the other end of the atoll, so it is hard for the dozen people living here to get supplies. – Baraka

4.17.6 Restaurants

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

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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

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 to ??.
- **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

**July 2013:** Gaston and Valentine’s pearl farm is now completely decommissioned. High taxes and limited time forced its closure. – Nakia

**2010:** 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 most of the time.

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)
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.

4.19.1 Pass
Takaroa has one pass called Passe Teauinae.
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 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 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 Cruiser Reports

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

2010: A couple of boats stopped here in 2010 on their way in from the Marquesas, and they anchored outside the lagoon. Apparently, the information in Charlies Charts is a little dated—the locals asked them why they didn’t come into the lagoon!

4.20 Takapoto and Tikei (No Passes)
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
- Charlie’s Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 76-79

4.22.1 Passes
There are two passes to enter Apataki.
- The Northwest Pass is called Passe Tehere which is near the village.
- The Southwest pass is called Passe Pakaka 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 Pass 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

2010: There is a dive type buoy just outside the SW pass on the south side. We began our approach there at 0930 with a two-meter swell and 10 knots E wind. We had 1-1.5 knots of outgoing current against us. By 1000 we noticed it was slack, and by 1030 the flood had started with chop at the inner end of the channel (E wind had increased to 10-15).

Charlie's Charts (4th edition) is not accurate in the placement of the range at the entrance, nor does it have the additional marks beyond the range. Patrick Bonnette's 1st edition is accurate with good chartlets. The entrance range is located to the E of the main pier bearing 071T. This will take you right down the middle of the deep entrance. Past the main ship pier off the village are two sets of marks for the dogleg to starboard. First are two green to starboard, and then farther in are two red to port (topped by triangles and circles respectively). Least depth encountered here was about 30'. You’re clear of the channel once you pass the second red mark. There is another mark indicating a reef but it’s well to port and of no consequence to the entrance. – Nakia

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. North side of the Passe Pakaka we found sand/coral in about 10-12 meters. Floats are needed. 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! – Nakia

2010: 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: 15.33.625S / 146.14.927W. 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 18.657S / 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


4.22.3 Yachtsman 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: 15.33S / 146.145W
- + (689) 87 727 813 + (689) 87 716 139, apatakicarenageservices@gmail.com & 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 based 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 using hydraulic trailer
- High pressure wash
- Blocking the vessel
- 2 days of no charge parking (Haul out and launch days are not counted)
- Launch

**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))**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Monohulls</th>
<th>Multihulls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Month</td>
<td>966 CFP / foot / month</td>
<td>1159 CFP / foot / month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Months</td>
<td>906 CFP / foot / month</td>
<td>1087 CFP / foot / month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Months</td>
<td>803 CFP / foot / month</td>
<td>1006 CFP / foot / month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 haulout since we were anchored out.

**Fuel Rates in xpf:**

- Diesel = 156 liter
- Gasoline = 159 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

2011: Alfred’s yacht lift (a hydraulic chariot) can handle monohulls and catamarans up to 20 tons, yet he likes to limit their weight to less than 17 or 18 tons. Pauline reviewed the prices for haulout and storage, and they appeared slightly less than those we have experienced in the USA and Caribbean in recent years. Parts and supplies are delivered from Tahiti via the three weekly airplane flights to Hiutahi village. We watched one monohull get lifted from the lagoon and placed in the storage yard. Alfred and his team did a professional job and everything went according to plan. – Yolo

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. 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). – 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
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.

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

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<thead>
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<th>Longitude</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APA00</td>
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<td>W146°14.504’</td>
<td>Apataki Carenage anchorage</td>
</tr>
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<td>APA01</td>
<td>S15°33.225’</td>
<td>W146°14.351’</td>
<td>Coral head on W side of route</td>
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<tr>
<td>APA02</td>
<td>S15°30.867’</td>
<td>W146°14.410’</td>
<td>Oyster buoy field on E side of route</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA03</td>
<td>S15°28.971’</td>
<td>W146°13.871’</td>
<td>Narrow channel btw two oyster buoy fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA04</td>
<td>S15°27.651’</td>
<td>W146°13.801’</td>
<td>Oyster buoy field on W side of route</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA05</td>
<td>S15°26.835’</td>
<td>W146°13.847”</td>
<td>Sandbank on E side of route</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA06</td>
<td>S15°23.539’</td>
<td>W146°12.968’</td>
<td>Single buoy and sand bank on E side of route</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA07</td>
<td>S15°23.040’</td>
<td>W146°12.295’</td>
<td>See anchorage note below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA08</td>
<td>S15°22.550’</td>
<td>W146°13.078’</td>
<td>Big coral head on SW side of route</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA09</td>
<td>S15°22.146’</td>
<td>W146°14.754’</td>
<td>Difficult to see small subm. coral head N of route</td>
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<tr>
<td>APA10</td>
<td>S15°21.159’</td>
<td>W146°17.310’</td>
<td>Coral head S of route</td>
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<tr>
<td>APA11</td>
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<td>W146°20.906’</td>
<td>Coral head S of route</td>
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<td>W146°22.508’</td>
<td>Coral head N of route</td>
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<td>APA13</td>
<td>S15°19.358’</td>
<td>W146°23.954’</td>
<td>Entrance to passe Tehere</td>
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<tr>
<td>APA14</td>
<td>S15°18.683’</td>
<td>W146°24.846’</td>
<td>Outside of passe Tehere</td>
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</tbody>
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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
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 bombies 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.

Dec. 2015: What Cruisers Can Expect at Apataki Careenage. These words about Apataki Careenage 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 Careenage 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 Careenage 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 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 Careenage 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). 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 location 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. The hydraulic lift trailer is French made. Alfred ordered it in 2008 and it arrived in 2009. Our concern would be if it broke down when you were ready to launch again because he doesn't have any backup trailer.

I made the mistake of asking Alfred about the availability of vegetables (from the write-up in the book) - tomatoes (for Dave!) in particular - and he immediately took me out to the tiny garden behind their kitchen/dining building. Before I could stop him he plucked the only three Roma style tomatoes that were barely beginning to blush red and gave them to me. I felt terrible about it. Right now, he's still in the "test garden" phase to see how things grow here, and they really don't have enough extra to sell to cruisers. His mother does sell eggs, but we didn't buy any after spending a fortune on pearls so I don't know how much they are.

Pearls--I was shocked to find such high prices here. We bought a pair of beautifully matched 9mm, Class A, round earrings for 30000 CFP and a loose 10mm, Class A, semi-round pearl to have mounted as a pendant later for 5800 CFP. Both are gifts for my sister's 50th later this year. All the finished (mounted) jewelry was in jewelry boxes with the prices written on them, and we were given an invoice. They had carved pearls on Greek leather necklaces for 5000. I'm very happy with what we bought since this was our last Tuamotan opportunity for purchasing pearls, but I just hope we don't find the same prices with better selection in Papeete! – 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 that 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, Fuel, 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.

**2011:** Waypoints entering the pass from Slipaway

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Coordinates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outside the pass</td>
<td>14 28.065 S / 146-04.014 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just inside the red and green marks at entrance</td>
<td>14 27.529 S / 146-03.668 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About half way through</td>
<td>14 27.307 S / 146-03.511 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Cardinal Mark</td>
<td>14 27.217 S / 146-03.466 W</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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. 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anchor</th>
<th>Latitude</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To Anchor 1</td>
<td>14.27.401S / 146.03.382W</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Anchor 2</td>
<td>14.27.574S / 146.03.268W</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Anchor 3</td>
<td>14.27.770 S / 146.02.953W</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anchorage</td>
<td>14 27.89 S / 146-02.19 W</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.23.3 Yachtsman 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

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

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.

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 or +689 87 21 12 64

Keep to port when entering the pass, & 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 yachts 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 Yachtsman Services

#### 4.25.3.1 Cooking Gas (Propane / Butane)

**Sept. 2016:** 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

**Sept. 2016:** Recycle - up the street from the wharf next to the post office there are two small green structures. Plastic and bottles. Nonrecycle- Up the street past the post office to the second cross street and turn left. Just around the corner is a raised platform. It 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

**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

**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

**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 yachts 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 yachts 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

**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 an 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)

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 2nd 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
- The other pass is called 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 so 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)

**May/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 rolly, but it’s still OK. When the winds get anywhere south of east, the swell gets bigger and the anchorage can get quite rolly - 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: **14-58.035 / 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 at ‘morning rush hour’. – Sea Fyer

2010: Rangiroa does not have any well-sheltered anchorage near either of the two passes, a big swell is generated parallel to the shore by any wind south of NE. (Note: we queried several cruisers anchored at the Tiputa Anchorage in May 2011 about protection in normal 15-20kt E-ESE winds, and they thought the anchorage (near Sea Flyer’s waypoint in the Tiputa anchorage) was ‘great’. White Princess’ warning is important to remember if a frontal passage is expected, where the winds will be strong out of the SE for a day or two). Remember that when the GRIB files are showing 20 knots, it may well be 20-30 knots. – White Princess

4.26.2.2 Blue Lagoon Anchorage

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 and had the right 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 we 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 01.607 S / 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.

May/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 Yachtsman Services

4.26.3.1 Fuel (Diesel / Gasoline)
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 lunch hours. – Sugar Shack.

2009 Yachtsman’s Guide published in Papeete says fuel is available in Avatoru in barrels of 100L or at the gas stations.

4.26.3.2 Trash and Recycling
Tiputa: Recycling bins are located on the main street “verre=glass,” “Cannette-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) has some tools, oil, etc... +689 40 960 244

4.26.4.4 Laundry
Sept. 2019: We found two places that would do laundry. Laverie Ohotu (Tiputa) +689 87 23 4491. And 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 +689 87 21 00 30 Beline
- Taxi +689 87 21 68 49 Raoul email 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 87.21.00.30 for an excellent taxi! – Asolare

2010: Taxis cost 2000 CFP, regardless of journey. One guidebook said that there isn’t enough traffic on the atoll to hitchhike, but s/v Salamander reported that they got rides right away the two times they tried (to/from the supermarket). Other cruisers reported walking, and being offered rides occasionally. – Salamander

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 Plage Pension some 300 meters south of the wharf Vini Spot / Mana Spot is not good in the village, even in the Post Office 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.

2010: For internet access, Iaroanet comes up on my connection list, but never actually connects to the internet and the WDG Hotspot signal is too poor to use (but we are a little way from the aerial at TopDive and have no booster!). There is access available from some pensions/hotels for a small fee and we saw an internet cafe near the airport as we went past. – Salamander

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 & 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.

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 Avatora. – Nehenehe

4.26.6 Restaurants

Chez Lili (Tiputa) +689 87 324 250 (on right if back is to the water) decent wifi, good & reasonably priced food
Snack Puna Ohotu +689 87 737 610 offers wifi
Pizzeria Moanatea +689 87 264 914 Hours 11h-14h & 17h-22h (closed Tues.) Located behind Magasin T.M.T.
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
- Top Dive Rangiroa +689 40 96 05 60
- Rangiroa Diving Center +689 40 96 05 55

4.26.7.2 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

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 through. – Consensus

Oct. 2016: There is a good snack opposite the wharf with reasonable prices and very generous portions! Rangiroa Plange offers a vried menu although we did not eat there. -- Asolare

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
4.26.7.3 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.

4.26.7.4 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

May/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/rougheer 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

**2010:** Rangiroa is the place that I was most excited about seeing in French Polynesia, ever since Allan saw a documentary piece on the dolphins swimming in the strong current here, and was so entranced with the place we almost made it our honeymoon destination 5 years ago.

And now, here we are. But so far, it's a little disappointing. Beautiful, but a bit, oh, fallen. The main hotel on the island, the Kia Ora, in front of which we are anchored, is closed for renovations. So it's a bit desolate in its abandoned state, and so far no restoring seems to be in progress.

We had planned a day trip to the south side of the atoll to snorkel and picnic in the Blue Lagoon, a beautiful "don't miss" about 3 hours away. But the weather didn't cooperate. The wind gusted to 26 un-forecast knots. The sea was raucous, the poor dinghy was hanging on for dear life. We looked hopefully to the south, through the wet, gray sky, the tossing sea, toward the Blue Lagoon, and knew it was the wrong day for this little adventure in paradise. The anchorage would be rocky, the sea would be too much for our little dinghies to get around, maybe even too rough to land them on the beach, and the rain looked like it intended to stick around on and off all day. So, almost halfway there, we turned around.

Now I don't want to leave the impression that we haven't had a good time in the last few days, despite the setbacks – Fly Away

**4.27 Makatea (Moorings, Village)**

**Guide Books:**
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

**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 been repaired since our visit.

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 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

**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

**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

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.

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:
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

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 viewpoint, 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
- The French Polynesia Dive Guide, pages 106-115

4.28.1 Pass

Tikehau has one pass called Tuheiava Pass.

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 starboard. Of course, this is our first pass and is possible we did not read the guestimator correctly. – 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 (we saw an 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 Tuheia 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

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

Aug/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 rolly, very pleasant, calm, and quiet. Sandy bottom, 8-10 meters, but watch for bommies are 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 great 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 Tikehau Pearl Resort Anchorage

Aug/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 as there are no motus to block the wind, but the reef does block the swell. Depending on trades if a lot of 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. Noodies, 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 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 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 here. 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 Yachtsman Services

4.28.3.1 Fuel (Diesel / Gasoline)

Sept. 2019: Fuel can be purchased in small quantities from Boulangerie Henry Peter “the bakery” which is located on the 2nd 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

4.28.3.2 Marina

Aug/Sept. 2018: According to the sign at the head of the dock there is now a 300xf 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

4.28.3.3 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 2nd 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

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 post 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 week 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

Aug/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. Connect with your browser and you are able to buy internet time via their website unlike Vini-Spot which online purchase have been broken for the past 18 months. 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

Sept. 2019: There is one bakery and one magasin in the village. – Sugar Shack

Bakery “Boulangerie Henry Peter” is on the 2nd 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 2nd 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.

Supply ship comes once a week. It ties to the end of the “T” head

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

Aug/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 2nd street (right from port). Open 11h-1500hrs
- **Snack Ohina** on 2nd 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 2nd 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.

Aug/Sept. 2018: 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 Linda said here Steak-Frites was very good. – Jacaranda

4.28.7 Activities

4.28.7.1 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, Rangiroa or possibly elsewhere.

We went diving in Tikehau 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

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. – Jacaranda

Aug/Sept.2018: 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

Sept. 2010: We can't comment on the diving as we never got the chance to do any ourselves - there was bad weather coming & we wanted better shelter so we've gone to Moorea. The reef outside the pass is very well protected in normal trade winds - much better than Anse Amyot in Toau, but don't even think about diving or snorkeling the pass due to the current. If diving here, the best time to go out is about 1 hour before low water, so you can get back in the lagoon after your dive, before the tide turns. That is when the local dive operators do it, but it should only be attempted if you have a powerful & reliable outboard on your dinghy as you will need to go in against an outgoing current. There is a dive buoy just outside the pass but it is popular, so if you use it, use a long painter, but there should be no problem anchoring as there is a sizable ledge before the dropoff. – White Princess

4.28.7.2 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 we were 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)

Guide Books:

- 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 Gambiers 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

2009: See Migrations report on Tepoto under Napuka, below. – Migrations

2003: We spent one calm night anchored outside off Tepoto, which has no pass entrance. The wall was so steep that it was like throwing your anchor against the Empire State building. I had to dive down and place the anchor by hand. The 2 dives to set and retrieve the anchor were stupendous. It had the healthiest coral we have seen anywhere and was teeming with fish. The wall was so steep that the anchor was in 20’ of water and the stern in over 300’. – From an SSCA Article

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: 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. 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. (Note: the website says ‘Takapoto’ in one place and Tepoto in another. Looking at the island locations and their probable route, I think he meant Tepoto). At Napuka we were two boat lengths away from the breakers on the outer reef and still in over 100 feet of water. – Migrations

Sept.

5 Appendix A – French Weather Terms

I copied this from somewhere online (sorry, don’t remember where). All cruisers headed for French-speaking locations should purchase French for Cruisers before they leave!!

....est stable ....is stable
....remonte ....is rising
...baisse./...chute ...is dropping/....is falling
A ... heures Temps Universal (TU) At ... Universal Time
a la fin at the end
ailleurs
les alizes
l' amelioration
l' anticyclone(A)
au debut
l' averse
Avez-vous la (prevision) meteo?
le barometre
bientot
la brise de mer
la brise de terre
la brouillard
la bruine
la brume
le Bulletin cote
le Bulletin grand large
le Bulletin large
le bulletin meteo
le Bulletin meteorologique Special (BMS)
la carte meteo (-rologique)
ce soir
centre
cet apres-midi
cette nuit
le ciel
clair
couvert
le creux
le CROSS
dans le nord
dans le quadrant sud-est
dans un rayon de 20 mn autour du
elsewhere
trade winds
improvement
high (H)
at the beginning
showers
Do you have the weather forecast?
warning
coastal fog banks
barometer
soon
sea breeze
land breeze
fog
drizzle
fog
coastal forecast
high seas forecast
offshore forecast
weather report
Special Weather Bulletin
weather map
this evening
center
this afternoon
tonight
sky
clear
overcast
trough
CROSS(broadcasts weather)
tropical cyclone
in the North
in the southeastern quadrant
within a 20 nm radius of
degage
le degre
le deplacement
la depression(D)
devenant
le diametre de l'oeil
la dorsale
l' echelle de Beaufort(B)
eclaircie
les eclairs
en cours
en journee
ensoleille
epars
est
et au sud du 21 nord
la force
la foudre
fraichissant
front chaud
front froid
le grain
la grele
les hectopascals(hpa)
heure locale
l' humidite relative
Il fait un temps de chien
Il pleut
Il y a une alerte cyclonique
isole
La mer est agitee
La mer est belle
La mer est calme
La mer est enorme
La mer est forte clear
degree
movemenrt
low(L)
becoming
diameter of the eye
ridge
Beaufort scale
sunny period
lightning
in progress
during the day
sunny
scattered
East
and South of 21 North
force
lightning that strikes something
freshening
warm front
cold front
squall
hail
millibars
local time
relative humidity
The weather is awful.
It is raining
There is a hurricane warning
isolated
moderate  Force 4 1.25 – 2.5 m
smooth  Force 2 0.1 – 0.5 m
Calm – glassy  Force 0 0 m
phenomenal  Force 9 (> ) 14 m
rough  Force 5 2.5 – 4 m
La mer est grosse
La mer est peu agitée
La mer est ridee
La mer est tresse grosse
La mer esttres forte
la nuit
le long du 20  ouest
Le vent va fraichir.
la ligne de grains
localement
matin
les millibars
modere
mollissant
la neige
les noeuds (nd) huh
nord
Nord-est
Nort-ouest
les nuages
nuageux
occasionnel
On attend une gross houle d'ouest vendredi
On s'attend a avoire des grains
On va avoir du mauvais temps
l’ onde tropicale
l’ orage
orageux
ouest
parfois
la perturbation
la pluie
plus tard
la position
la position prevue

high  Force 7 6 – 9 m
slight  Force 3 – 5  0.5 – 1.25 m
Calm – rippled  Force 1 0 - 0.1 m
very high  Force 8 9 – 14 m
very rough  Force 6 4 – 6 m
at night
Along 20 west
The wind is supposed to increase.
squall line
locally
morning
millibars
moderate
moderating
snow
knots (kts)
North
Northeast
Northwest
clouds
cloudy
occasional
There is supposed to be a large swell from the west on Friday
We're supposed to get squalls.
We're going to have bad weather

tropical wave
thunderstorm
stormy
West
sometimes
disturbance
rain
later
position
forecast position
la pression atmospherique

Quel beau temps !

la rafale

s'attenuant

s'étendant jusqu'à 180 mn

s'orientant

se comblant

se decalant vers

se dissipant

se dreusant

se renforçant ... lentement

le secteur

la situation general

stationnaire

sud

Sud-est

Sud-ouest

suivant

sur l'extrême nord-est

la tempete
da tempete tropicale
temoraire

le temps

le temps à grains

la tendance ulterieure

le thalweg

le tonnerre

la trajectoire du cyclons

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<table>
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<tr>
<th>French Term</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>la trombe</td>
<td>waterspout</td>
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<tr>
<td>valable a partir du</td>
<td>valid beginning</td>
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<tr>
<td>valable jusqu'au</td>
<td>valid until</td>
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<tr>
<td>variable</td>
<td>variable</td>
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<td>variable depressionaire</td>
<td>variable in depression</td>
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<tr>
<td>venant</td>
<td>becoming</td>
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<tr>
<td>le vent</td>
<td>wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vent - fort coup de vent</td>
<td>strong gale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vent - bonne brise</td>
<td>Force 9 41 – 47 kts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vent - calme</td>
<td>fresh breeze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vent - coup de vent</td>
<td>Force 5 17 – 21 kts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vent - grand frais</td>
<td>calm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vent - jolie brise</td>
<td>Force 0 0 – 1 kts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vent - legere brise</td>
<td>gale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vent - ouragan</td>
<td>Force 8 34 – 40 kts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vent - petite brise</td>
<td>near gale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vent - tempete</td>
<td>Force 7 28 – 33 kts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vent - tres legere brise</td>
<td>moderate breeze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vent - vent fraise</td>
<td>Force 4 11 – 16 kts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vent - violente tempete</td>
<td>light breeze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vent assez fort</td>
<td>Force 2 4 – 6 kts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vent dominant</td>
<td>hurricane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>virant</td>
<td>Force 12 64(+) kts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>visibilite</td>
<td>gentle breeze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>visibilite mauvaise</td>
<td>Force 3 – 5 7 – 10 kts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>visibilite bonne</td>
<td>storm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>visibilite entre 2 et 5 milles marins</td>
<td>Force 10 48 – 55 kts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>visibilite inferieure de 2 milles marins</td>
<td>light air Force 1 1 – 3 kts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>visibilite superieure a 5 milles marins</td>
<td>strong breeze Force 6 22 – 27 kts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la vitesse</td>
<td>violent storm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la zoine de hautes pressions</td>
<td>Force 11 56 – 63 kts</td>
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<tr>
<td>la zone</td>
<td>fairly strong wind</td>
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<tr>
<td>la zone de basses pressions</td>
<td>Force 6 22 – 27 kts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>prevailing wind</td>
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<td></td>
<td>veering</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>visibility</td>
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<td></td>
<td>poor visibility</td>
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<td></td>
<td>good visibility</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Between 2 &amp; 5 nm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>less than 2 nm</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>greater than 5 nm</td>
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<tr>
<td>la vitesse</td>
<td>speed</td>
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<tr>
<td>la zoine de hautes pressions</td>
<td>high pressure area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la zone</td>
<td>zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la zone de basses pressions</td>
<td>low pressure area</td>
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</tbody>
</table>