



Before You Go

This information has been supplied by the Tahiti Tourism Board.

Passport & Visa Requirements:

Every visitor to French Polynesia must have:

1. A valid passport.
2. A return airline ticket to their resident country or to at least two more continuing destinations.
3. Sufficient funds to cover their planned stay.

For stays of up to one month, there are no visa requirements for citizens of the U.S., Canada, or Mexico. A foreigner with a residence card for the U.S. is not exempt from the above requirements and should consult the French Consulate based in the U.S. for information. Citizens of European Union countries do not need a visa for stays of up to three months; citizens of other countries should consult the French Consulate.

As entry requirements are subject to modification without notice, it is advisable to check with your travel arranger before departure.

Contact one of the French Consulates in North America for further details and visa information.

LOCAL CUSTOMS:

Greeting

When greeting people, shake their hand, introduce yourself and present a business card, if travelling on business. Polynesians are generally very casual and a relaxed atmosphere usually ensues. No matter what the setting, conversation generally flows very easily.

Dress

Polynesians normally dress informally due to the humidity of the climate. Businessmen and executives are expected to dress conventionally. However, a light cotton suit and tie for men, and a trouser suit (pant suit) or conservative dress for women is preferable to normal business attire. When not conducting business, casual clothes are acceptable in most situations, with the exception of some restaurants and hotel lounges.

Smoking

As with most countries, smoking is the subject of debate in French Polynesia. Tobacco advertising has recently been banned there. Most locations provide some form of rest area, but many of these are designated as non-smoking and some have banned smoking on their premises completely. If you are a smoker, exercise discretion and sensitivity when selecting a place in which to smoke. The best advice would be not to smoke unless others around you do so.

Region-specific details

Bora Bora has two official languages: Tahitian and French. Although English is widely spoken, it may be useful to learn a few phrases and greetings in French. Polynesian French is linguistically similar to the French spoken in France; the difference may be likened to that of British English and American English.

The Polynesian people are generally very religious. The dominant faith is Christianity and this should be borne in mind, especially on Sundays and major religious holidays.

Custom Regulations:

All items brought in by travelers for their personal use are duty-free, provided they are non-prohibited items and are re-exported out of French Polynesia within six months. These include 200 cigarettes, 100 cigarillos or 50 cigars; 50 grams of perfume; 500 grams of coffee; 100 grams of tea; and two liters of alcohol, champagne, or wine.

No one under 17 years of age is entitled to duty-free tobacco or alcohol.

All telecommunications and radio equipment require an import license, and certain types of animal life and flora are protected by customs regulations. Domestic pets are prohibited unless authorized by the "Service du développement rural de Polynésie française" Tel: (689) 42-81-47.

Strictly prohibited imports include live animals, all plant material, flowers, fruits, and cultured pearls of non-French Polynesian origin. Naturally, guns and weapons of any kind, ammunition, counterfeit items, and narcotics are prohibited outright.

Upon departure, special attention is paid by Customs to purchase documentation for medicines, pearls, works of art, antiques, and unusual items acquired while in French Polynesia.

Useful Phrases:

Even though English is spoken and understood in most hotels, restaurants, and shops, learning a few Tahitian words and phrases is encouraged and appreciated.

It can also be helpful, but not mandatory, to brush up on a few basic French phrases as French and Tahitian are the official languages and both are commonly used.

The Tahitian alphabet contains only thirteen letters.

Vowels: a as in car, e as in may, i as in machine, o as in cold, and u as in salute.

Consonants: f,h,m,n,p,r,t,v pronounced as in English with the exceptions of the h pronounced sh when preceded by i or followed by o and the r sometimes having a trill sound.

hello, good day, friendly greeting – ia orana

goodbye – nana

welcome – maeva

thank you – mauru'uru

no problem!, no worries! – aita pe'ape'a

how are you? – eaha te huru?

good! – maita'i

to your health, toast – manuia

house – fare

bank – fare moni

church – fare pure

post office – fare rata

hospital – fare ma'i

store – fare toa

doctor – taote

police – muto'i

man – tane

woman – vahine

child – tamarii

yes – e, oia

no – aita

small – iti

big, large – nui

islet in the lagoon – motu

ancient temple – marae

traditional quilts – tifaifai

traditional dance – tamurei

fenua – land

flower – tiare

ocean – moana

sun – mahana

moon – avae

star – fetia

earth oven – himaa

feast – tamaaraa

morning – poipoi

evening – ahiahi

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