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24 DAYS SOUTH PACIFIC LUXURY CRUISE - PAPEETE TO VALPARAISO

Departing from Papeete, this 23-day tour takes in the pearls of the South Pacific, as you sail towards South America. Beginning first with the fragrant and welcoming islands of French Polynesia, enjoy five days of discovery in this archipelago. We will overnight off Pitcairn Island, famous for being the home of some of the mutineers of the HMS Bounty. Then it's three days to relax at sea before reaching Easter Island, home of the world's most enigmatic stone monoliths called Moai. Your final stops are Alexander Selkirk and Robinson Crusoe Islands. Some departures may have slightly modified itineraries. Please confirm the itinerary with an Expedition Specialist.



ITINERARY

Day 1 Papeete (Tahiti), French Polynesia

Papeete is the center of the tropical paradise of French Polynesia, where islands fringed with gorgeous beaches and turquoise ocean await to soothe the soul. This spirited city is the capital of French Polynesia and serves as a superb base for further exploration of Tahiti - an island of breathtaking landscapes and oceanic vistas. A wonderful lagoon of crisp,



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clear water begs to be snorkeled, stunning black beaches and blowholes pay tribute to the island's volcanic heritage, and lush green mountains beckon you inland on adventures, as you explore extraordinary Tahiti. Visit to relax and settle into the intoxicating rhythm of life in this Polynesian paradise.

Day 2 Moorea Island, French Polynesia

Moorea is a high mountainous island with two nearly symmetrical bays found on the north coast. The island's triangular shape has been likened to a heart or a bat. Eight mountain peaks reaching a height of up to 1,207 meters give Moorea a very rugged silhouette. The reef surrounding the island encloses a narrow lagoon - a RAMSAR Wetland - and has barely any motu (reef islets). Sharks and rays are some of the lagoon's attractions. The island is only one-eighth the size of neighboring Tahiti and has a more relaxed lifestyle. A road leads around Moorea, passing small villages with their churches and the resorts and smaller hotels mainly found on the north coast. A detour into the interior will show large pineapple plantations, French Polynesia's only agricultural school, ancient marae (stone platforms), and splendid views of the island from Belvedere above Cook's Bay. Many of the 18,000 residents work in Tahiti, taking one of the ferries plying between Vaiare on the east coast and Papeete. This led to Papeete being one of France's busiest ports in passenger volume. Foreign visitors either come into Temae airport, tucked in-between the Green Pearl golf course and Temae's public beach, or by ship entering one of the two bays on the north coast. Both bays are connected to Captain Cook's visit in 1777: he stayed in Opunohu Bay, but to honor him Pao Pao Bay has been named Cook's Bay.

Day 3 Fakarava, Tuamotu Archipelago, French Polynesia

Fakarava is oblong-shaped and has an almost continuous string of reef and motu stretching for 40 km (25 mi) on its eastern edge. It's the second largest of the Tuamotu atolls, located 450 km (280 miles) northeast of Tahiti and 120 km (75 miles) southeast of Rangiroa. It's renowned for the drift diving in its two passes - Garuae (also spelled Ngarue) in the north near the main town of Rotoava (and the airport) and Tamakohua Pass, 48 km (30 mi) across the lagoon in the south. The tiny village of Tetamanu, situated by the southern pass, was once the capital of the Tuamotus and houses the first church built in the archipelago in 1874. In 2006 the entire atoll was deemed a UNESCO biosphere reserve; to preserve the lagoon no overwater bungalows have been built in it. Fakarava was "discovered" by Russian explorer Fabian Gottlieb Von Bellingshausen in 1820; some 20 years later missionaries arrived, in the guise of fanatical Catholic priest Honore Laval, and began building churches.

Day 4 Day at sea

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Day 5 Atuona - Hiva Oa, Marquesas Island, French Polynesia & Tahuata, Marquesas Islands, French Polynesia

The largest of the southern islands, Hiva Oa, the master pillar or final post of the "Great House" \- which represents the Marquesan archipelago in the local mythology - has always been the rival of Nuku Hiva. The island is shaped like a seahorse and has a mountain range running southwest to northeast and



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the main peaks, Mt. Temetiu and Mt. Feani form a real wall around Atuona. Atuona, a peaceful little port at the head of the Taaoa Bay, also known as Traitors Bay, has emerged from obscurity due to having had the privilege of being the final resting place of Paul Gauguin and of the singer Jacques Brel. The tombs of these famous personalities are on the side of the Calvary Cemetery looking out across the bay and are places of great pilgrimage. In the village, the Gauguin Museum displays items related to the painter's stay there at the beginning of the century and has copies of his works.

If you're looking for a perfect incarnation of Polynesia's unparalleled beauty, you just found it. Discover mesmerizing Tahuata and unveil all its secrets. Part of the Marquesas, this is the tiniest inhabited island of the archipelago, with only 700 inhabitants. This croissant-shaped piece of land was discovered in 1595 by Spanish navigator Alvaro de Mendana de Neira and has been a dreamy destination for many travelers since. Indeed, its spectacular and idyllic scenery, made of contrasts between impressive mountains and sandy beaches, would inspire every poet - and not only! How can't you be impressed admiring Meae Ufa, a 3,181-foot volcano, and the stunning twin bays Ivaiva Nui and Ivaiva Iti? The island is also nicknamed Monoi Island - thanks to the great quality of its tiare oil, heritage of traditions, and secrets orally transmitted generation to generation. Tahuata has a huge reputation across French Polynesia for another savoir-faire, its rich craftsmanship. The craftsmen excel at carving beautiful pieces, spears, puzzles, dishes they produce on bone or rosewood. These unique creations are exhibited in the craft center of the pretty village of Hapatoni and in the Vaitahu Town Hall Museum. Very close to one another (15-min boat ride or 30-min walk), these two tiny villages are absolutely

worth a visit with their charming mix of Polynesian and European atmosphere. And don't forget to have a swim at Hana Moenoa Beach, the island's most beautiful one. Maybe you'll come across sea turtles in its crystal-clear waters.

[Day 6 Hatiheu, Nuku Hiva, French Polynesia](#)

Shrink before amphitheater-sized bays of deep water and folded valleys clad with dense green jungle, on arrival in Hatiheu. You'll be warmly welcomed to this raw and ravishing island of natural beauty, legend, and awe-inspiring views. Nuku Hiva is the largest of the Marquesas Islands, which are strung across a blissfully blue Indian Ocean. Remote and wonderful, you can find waterfalls tumbling from cliffs, volleyball-sized breadfruit clustering in trees, and incredible sacrificial sites and petroglyphs. Explore to see cinematic views of sprawling bays unraveling, while on breathtaking mountain hikes and drives. Or take it easy, strolling by the water and watching yachts mingling in the turquoise seas, as sharks circle for offcuts tossed by fishermen. Wild horses trot tight streets, and pigs shuffle through the undergrowth, clambering up and down dense mountainsides. Journey south to see the Tiki Tuhiva carving watching out over rich-blue waves. The gigantic statue is a proud example of the island's resurgent culture, which was almost extinguished by European colonists. Take the chance to duck out of the afternoon sun into the stone-walled shelter of Notre Dame Cathedral, which is decorated with carved sculptures and soaring wooden eaves. The church's crooked towers rise incongruously from the rainforest's tangle - follow the ethereal sounds of choral singing to find it. Nuku Hiva's ceremonial sites, crafts, and stone statues add further layers of intrigue to this magical Pacific Island.

[Day 7 Hanavave, Fatu Hiva, French Polynesia](#)



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Situated in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, Fatu Hiva is the most isolated island of the most isolated archipelago on the planet. Sometimes called the 'island at the edge of the world', Fatu Hiva is also the greenest, wildest, and most mountainous island of the Marquesas. And what mountains! The island's dramatic cliffs and lush valleys, illuminate the extraordinary Polynesian countryside and will give you the impression of being in a Paul Gauguin painting. On your arriving in this tropical paradise, you'll be welcomed with the traditional welcome to the Marquesas Islands, 'Mave Mai', involving ancestral dances. Let yourself be carried away by the Haka rhythm before discovering the charming village of Hanavave. After strolling among the village's picturesque fare houses, the authentic Marquesan constructions, uncover the island's hidden gems and secrets. Stunning waterfalls hurling down from impressive peaks forming magnificent lagoons and rushing fresh rivers. Nothing better than a hike to properly appreciate and admire the fabulous scenery that surrounds you. A real highlight of the island, the spectacular Baie des Vierges is said to be one of the most beautiful bays on Earth. These crystal-clear waters are home to myriad marine life species like manta rays or sea turtles swimming into a ballet of multicolor fishes. What more do you need to believe Fatu Hiva is a true paradise?

Days 8 - 9 Day at sea

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Day 10 Mangareva (Gambier Islands), French Polynesia

In the Gambier Islands of French Polynesia, Mangareva is the largest island with a population of over 1,200 people. Most live in Rikitea, the largest village on the island. A high central ridge runs the length of Mangareva peaking with Mt. Duff, which rises over 440 meters from the sea on the island's south coast. The island has a large lagoon sprinkled with coral reefs whose tropical fish and the black-lip oysters have helped islanders survive much more successfully than on other nearby islands. Small ships are able to enter the lagoon of Mangareva. Ashore visitors can walk through the town, see the remains of the massive stone and coral buildings dating back to the 19th century or climb up Mt. Duff. The highlights in town include the cathedral with its mother-of-pearl shell altar and objects designed and built in the 1830s and 1840s and partially restored by the students of Rikitea's school just a few years ago.

Day 11 Day at sea

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Day 12 Adamstown (Pitcairn Island), Pitcairn

Home to the original mutineers of the Bounty, Adamstown is today the capital of all four Pitcairn Islands. The islands - the last British Overseas Territory in the Pacific - include the namesake Pitcairn Island itself, plus the uninhabited Oeno, Henderson, and Ducie. Pitcairn is the archipelago's only inhabited island, with a population of just 50 centered in Adamstown. It is no surprise that the nine mutineers along with six Tahitian men, 12 Tahitian women, and one child stopped on



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Pitcairn in 1790; with its sloped and varied landscape, lush tropical promise, and equidistant location between Peru and New Zealand, Pitcairn would have seemed an ideal hiding spot for the mutineers to settle. The ship was burnt to avoid detection (the ballast stone remains of the wreck in Bounty Bay). However, the ideal bucolic life that mutineer leader Fletcher Christian had envisaged was not to be. Poor treatment of the Tahitian men led to alcoholism, chaos, and carnage, and by 1800 only John Adams - who had recently discovered Christianity - remained. Adams taught the women and children to read and write from the bible. The capital is named after him. Not only had the island been misplaced on early maps of the region, but it can also be very difficult to come ashore as large breakers tend to build up just in front of the small harbor of Bounty Bay. The local museum houses the HMS Bounty Bible, the same bible that Adams taught the women and children to read and write from in the early 19th century.

Days 13 - 15 Day at sea

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Days 16 - 17 Easter Island, Chile

Easter Island, the easternmost settled island of Polynesia, received its European name in 1722 when the island was spotted by a Dutch expedition under Roggeveen on Easter Sunday. The triangular-shaped island of 163 square kilometers is famous for the hundreds of statues known locally as moai. Rolling hills covered in grasslands, eucalyptus forests, and a

rocky shore surround Hangaroa, the island's only village on the southwestern coast. This is where Captain Cook landed in 1774, where missionaries built the first church, and where ships find the best protection from winds and swells. Small beaches and transparent waters invite swimmers and snorkelers, but it is the cultural aspect that attracts visitors. Since 1935 the island has been a National Historic Monument and today 43.5% of the island is a national park administered by the Chilean National Forest Corporation and Mau Henua, a local community group. The island's national park was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1995. Found slightly more than 3,500 kilometers west of Chile, the island was annexed in 1888. Used as a sheep ranch for many decades, the island was opened in 1965, and an airstrip was built. The U.S. Air Force set up a base to monitor the behavior of the Earth's outer atmosphere and by 1987 NASA had the runway extended as an emergency runway for the space shuttle. This never happened, but tourism benefitted from this improvement, and today the island receives more than 100,000 visitors a year.

Days 18 - 21 Day at sea

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Day 22 Robinson Crusoe Island, Chile

Robinson Crusoe Island is located 600 kilometers off the coast of Chile. The island is a rugged volcanic speck where 70 percent of its plant species are endemic, and is the largest of the Juan Fernandez Islands, a small archipelago that since 1935 is a



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Chilean National Park which in 1977 was declared a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve. This island has witnessed and played an important role in Chilean and world history. In 1704 the Scottish sailor Alexander Selkirk was marooned on the island and stayed for more than 4 years, eventually inspiring Daniel Defoe's novel Robinson Crusoe - hence the name of the island. 1750 the village of San Juan Bautista was founded at Cumberland Bay and by 1779 there were already 7 small fortresses bristling with guns. The island's isolation offered Spain a splendid place for setting up a penal colony, to which high-ranking Chilean patriots were deported in the early 19th century. In 1915, during the First World War, three British ships and a German one, the Dresden, engaged in a sea battle which ended with the scuttling of the German cruiser. Today there are currently around one thousand people living in the archipelago, most of them in the village of San Juan Bautista engaged in fishing for the - spiny lobster-, a delicacy exported to the mainland.

Day 23 Day at sea

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Day 24 Valparaiso, Chile

Since time immemorial Valparaiso has inspired writers, poets, musicians, and artists alike. If the city is still a little rough around the edges, this only adds to its bohemian ambience; the architecture, style, street art, nightlife, and live music scenes of Valparaiso are some of the best in the world. Add colorful

cliff-top homes to the mix and you'll soon see why Valparaiso is many people's favorite Chilean city. The city was founded in 1536 by Spanish conquistador Juan de Saavedra, who named the city after his birthplace. Many of the colonial buildings he implemented are still standing today, despite the rain, wind, fire, and several earthquakes (one of which almost leveled the city in 1906). Quirky architecture also abounds; poetry lovers and amateur architects will no doubt want to make the 45 km trip south to Chilean poet laureate (and Nobel Prize winner) Pablo Neruda's ship-shaped house and museum for a taste of the extraordinary. The city and region are also extremely well known for their love of good food and wine. The vineyards of the nearby Casablanca Valley - first planted in the early 1980s - have earned worldwide recognition in a relatively short space of time. However, Chile's viticulture history does date back much farther than that. De Saavedra brought grape vines on his voyage to South America in order to make his own wine and this led to a new grape brandy being created, Pisco. Today give any Chilean a Pisco and wherever they are in the world, they will be home.

Please Note:

The excursions are provided as a sample of what may be offered on this voyage and are subject to change.



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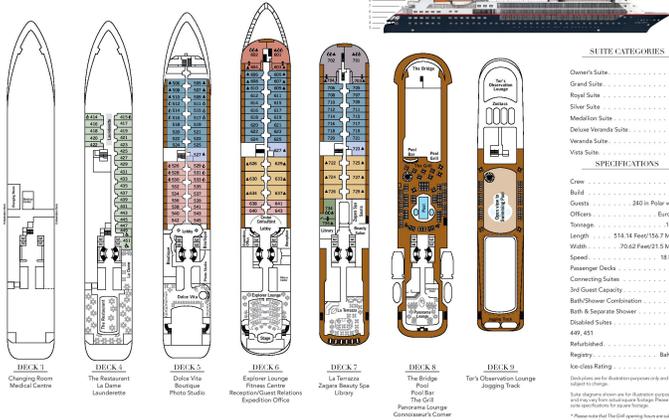


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Veranda

Vista





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