

Tahiti and Local Islands

Chris' work associate Wendy retired early two years ago to pursue a round-the-Pacific trip with Colin. They decided that their sailing catamaran BANGORANG could make it, so off they went. After a year in Mexico, they embarked on the "puddle jump" across the Pacific to the Marquesas and then to Tahiti. Their reports of the various places in the Pacific were quite interesting. I was looking up our friends Dennis and Tricia cruise path starting in Tahiti on Regent Cruises, and found a really good deal on Princess for a 10-day island excursion. Chris really wanted to go someplace for a winter vacation, so off we went with three weeks notice. Airline fares rise at that time before a flight.

Moorea We agreed to meet with Dennis and Tricia for the first four days of the trip. We were on flights to Tahiti that were supposed to be an hour apart. Ours arrived an hour early, theirs arrived an hour late. They rented a car and we headed for the Aremiti ferry for the 45 minute ride to Moorea. We had rented a house from Vacation Rentals By Owner (VRBO) which was a great deal, with easy access to a really good wind-surfing, sandy beach with nice coral. We tried to stock up on some food and found that on a weekend, there is no meat, vegetables, fruit, eggs, milk, bread, or money in any ATM. We had canned goods for dinner. There was wonderful Rotui fruit juice since it is made on Moorea. It was windy, so we rented a small boat from the Timpaniers Hotel next door and set off for an off-shore coral island (motu in Tahitian). The water was clear and the fish were nice, there were even large sting rays and reef sharks that were very interested in any food that could be offered.

Tahiti We took the Aremiti ferry back to Tahiti, where we stayed at the Pension Armelle in Punaauia. This was a great location, right on the protected beach with a coral reef right there. Kayaks were free. The food there was excellent. They rented us a car for a day so we could drive around the island to see the Tahiti museum, waterfalls, the sights, and some beaches. Chris found a bikini and some nice evening dresses shopping in Papeete. Her clothing choices for this trip were outstanding. She looked wonderful at all times. Louis did not walk around Papeete or do shopping.

Huahine This is really two islands connected by a bridge. We took "Le Truck" from the tender port to the main town of Fare and rented one of the two cars available since it was rainy and there was a lot of road to travel. There were several Mare or outdoor temples from before colonization. There was a nice desolated beach to explore. Chris jumped in the river with the sacred blue-eyed eels. This island was very pretty with clear water, nice beaches and few people.

Rangiroa This is the second largest coral atoll in the Pacific (Kwajalein is larger) as it is 50 kilometers across. There is spectacular scuba diving between the motus and a shallow place inside called "The Aquarium" which is spectacular on a sunny day. We took a boat shuttle to another boat parked there and used that as a base for snorkeling. There were huge numbers of varied fish and coral in crystal clear water. Once the glass-side tour boat moved in around me and I was confronted by thousands of fish swimming fast directly at me to get near that boat for the provided food.

Raiatea (gray) South of Tahaa on map. Allowed Ocean Princess to dock. It is the second most populous island and shares a reef with the island of Tahaa. This central location was used as a meeting spot for the native Tahitians and it has the large central Mare where round rocks were taken to start other Mare. The souvenir sellers packed up at 4PM and boarded the ship with their children to provide a very interesting dance program. Later, a professional group from the island entertained.

Bora Bora In World War II, the United States used this island as a storage and trans-shipment point. The servicemen left behind 115 children. It is called the Romantic Island and many Americans have their honeymoons here. We took a 4-wheel drive trip around the island and a boat trip around the lagoon where we visited large sting rays, sharks, coral, and a white mud area.

Ocean Princess This is a much smaller ship than the modern luxury liners as it is only 30,000 tons with 700 passengers. The new 50th anniversary menu has half the dishes containing some sort of liquor. Only a group of 20 Brazilians seemed to actively participate in activities. The median passenger seemed to be an American couple married for 50 years. Most people avoided getting in the water either in the pool, hot tubs, beach. or ocean. Ship excursions were way overpriced.