

An underwater photograph showing the silhouettes of surfers swimming in clear blue water. The surfers are positioned around the frame, with their arms and legs visible. The water is bright and clear, with some bubbles and light reflections. The overall mood is serene and active.

Surfing

© Gregoire Le Bacon

THE ISLANDS of
TAHITI

SOCIETY ISLANDS | TUAMOTU ISLANDS | GAMBIER ISLANDS | MARQUESAS ISLANDS | AUSTRAL ISLANDS



Contents

SOCIETY ISLANDS

- 11. Tahiti
- 17. Moorea

TUAMOTU ISLANDS

- 19. Rangiroa
- 19. Tikehau
- 19. Tuamotu's hidden gems

FAQ

- 20.

USEFUL TIPS

- 22 / 23.

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Surf the best waves all year round in *The Islands of Tahiti*

Surfing, first observed by explorers such as James Cook in Hawaii and Tahiti in the 18th century, is now practiced in many areas worldwide. And in French Polynesia in particular, surfing is more than just a sport, it's a tradition deeply rooted in the hearts of Polynesians. *The Islands of Tahiti* are a paradise for all board sports, including paddleboarding, bodyboarding and wing foil. Surfing, like va'a, remains a popular sport in French Polynesia, especially for big wave lovers!

The good news is that there are waves all year round. There are two surfing seasons. From November to May, it's the north swell, and from June to October, it's the south swell.

Whether you're a seasoned surfer in search of powerful, technical waves, or a beginner looking for an introduction to surfing, the Polynesian islands have everything you need to enjoy your passion.

The birthplace of surf

The history of surfing in French Polynesia is deeply rooted in local culture, with our islands being the cradle of the sport. In fact, surfing is the oldest sport practiced in *The Islands of Tahiti*: in ancient times, Polynesian royalty enjoyed riding waves on wooden boards.

However, it wasn't until the early 20th century that surfing gained in popularity, thanks to iconic Hawaiian figures such as Duke Kahanamoku, who contributed to make the sport popular in the United States and around the world.

Today, surf in French Polynesia remains a fascinating sport, and also a way to preserve and celebrate our cultural heritage, and the intimate relationship between the people and the ocean.



Legend

Levels



Beginner



Intermediate



Advanced

Types of surf spots

Beach break:



a surf spot where waves break on a sandy beach. Suitable for beginner surfers, waves usually break gently, but can also present challenges for advanced surfers due to their dynamic nature.

Reef break:



a surf spot where waves break over a rocky bottom underwater. These spots often offer powerful, consistent waves, creating an ideal environment for experienced surfers looking for a challenge. The stable nature of the seabed contributes to more consistent waves than beach breaks.

River mouth:



a surf spot located at the mouth of a river. Waves form where the river current meets the ocean or sea, creating unique surfing conditions. These spots often offer dynamic waves suited to surfers looking for a different experience from traditional spots.



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SOCIETY ISLANDS

Tahiti

PAPENO'O - Vaituoru



The mouth of the Papeno'o river is perfectly suited to novices: the bottom is made up of pebbles and sand, offering ample space for beginners. Intermediate surfers can also appreciate it, as the spot offers some technical challenges.

MAHINA - Ahonu



Ahonu is a spot on Mahina that offers ideal waves for learning, with water generally at waist height. When it is crowded, young surfers are usually given priority on the waves.

MAHINA - Orofara



Located less than a mile (1 km) away from Ahonu, Orofara is a beach spot with waves for all levels, on the left and on the right-hand side, with small river mouths.

MAHINA - Point Venus



Point Venus is a must for surf enthusiasts and often offers ideal conditions towards the end of the year, offering regular waves ideal for intermediate surfers. The presence of a reef protecting the beach creates safer surfing conditions.

PAPARA - Taharu'u



The spot is famous for its waves, which break in both directions thanks to a peak right in the center of the mouth. Surfers can perform elegant, radical or aerial maneuvers, starting to the left or to the right-hand side and ending on a pebble and black sand bottom.

PUNAAUIA - Taapuna



To reach this spot, it's best to swim there, or for organized surfers, to hop on a boat. The spot is renowned for its technical waves that break on a reef bottom.

WEST TAIARAPU - Vairao pass



The wave at Vairao Pass is an offshore left that breaks on a reef bottom. It sometimes hosts a federal, multi-disciplinary surfing competition with standup paddleboard, longboard, kneeboard or bodyboard. The surf spot is usually uncomplicated and offers plenty of opportunity to work on tricks, in a heavenly setting.

WEST TAIARAPU - Teahupo'o



Teahupo'o is a mythical spot and a wave of international renown, both feared and adored, offering one of the most beautiful waves in the world. This spot is one of the most iconic stages of the WCT (World Champion Tour) and will also host the surfing events of the 2024 Olympic Games. This mythical wave is the perfect spot to offer a breathtaking show.





TAHITI

List of approved service providers:

- Aloha Surf School Tahiti
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- École De Surf ITINUI
surfitinui@gmail.com - +689 87 73 14 21
- École De Surf Tama He'e
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- Teahupoo Tours And Surf Adventures
teahupoadventures@gmail.com - +689 89 78 23 53



Moorea

HAAPITI - Haapiti Pass



Haapiti is one of Moorea's most popular spots. To get there, you have to paddle all across the lagoon and swim for 25 minutes to reach the pass, where the waves are sure to be. Don't hesitate to ask local surfers for advice and guidance on how to get to this spot, which is so precious to them.

MOOREA - Atiha's wave



In Atiha Bay, a superb swell rolls in from Avarapa Pass, offering perfect left and right-handed side waves. Some humpback whales sometimes rest there with their calves in season (July to November). Kindly note whale-watching is regulated by a territorial decree.

PAPETOAI - Taotai Pass



A powerful wave that requires advanced skill and technique. The left-hand wave breaks on the reef of the pass.

MOOREA

List of approved service provider:

- Lakana Fly Kite School Moorea

lakanafly@gmail.com - +689 87 70 96 71

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TUAMOTU ISLANDS

Rangiroa

AVATORU - Avatoru pass



Home to the emblematic Rangiroa Pro Surf, an annual competition held every year, the Avatoru spot is renowned for its magnificent right-hand side waves. The take-off is a little abrupt, but what follows is magical, with perfect tubes. Be careful at the end of the wave, however, as a few bits of reef flats can appear dangerously. This annual competition also gives Polynesian surfers the chance to collect points for entry into the professional circuit run by the World Surf League (WSL).

Tikehau

TUHEIAVA - Tuheiava pass



This surf spot is only accessible by boat and requires focus as the wave breaks along a sharp reef in shallow water. It's best to take advice from local surfers and to have a strong technique. On the way back from your adventure, you may stop at the coral garden or admire manta rays dancing in the shallow water.

Tuamotu's hidden gems

AHE and APATAKI atolls



Ahe and Apataki, two atolls in the Tuamotu Islands, offer unique surfing sessions thanks to world-class reef breaks and crystal-clear waters.

Tourism Committee:

tourismerangiroa@gmail.com - +689 40 93 11 30

FAQ

IS IT POSSIBLE TO BRING MY SURFBOARD ON THE PLANE?

Absolutely, and it's even free if you choose Air Tahiti Nui! This airline, symbolized by the tiare (*Polynesia's emblematic flower*), allows for surfboards of up to 8.2 feet (2.50 meters) and 50.7 lbs (23 kg) at no additional cost. With Air France, your board doesn't incur an extra cost if it replaces your standard piece of baggage. For other airlines, a specific allowance will generally apply.

On domestic flights, Air Tahiti accepts surfboards up to 1.80 m in length as hold baggage, providing space is available on the flight and an excess baggage fee must be paid if necessary. Air Moana prefers pieces no longer than 1.58 m and weighing no more than 32 kg. In exceptional cases, the airline may accept a surfboard measuring 1.80 m, depending on the aircraft's load.

WHERE CAN I RENT A BOARD IN TAHITI, AND CAN I BUY EQUIPMENT LOCALLY?

On the island, several providers offer board rentals by the hour, half-day or day. Some accommodations also offer this service. You can also meet local shapers/repair experts and find shops in Tahiti to buy boards, wetsuits and accessories. To find out more, visit [our website](#).

CAN I TAKE LESSONS? FROM WHAT AGE?

Yes, several schools exist, for courses or private lessons, with equipment provided: the list is available on *Tahiti Tourisme's* website.. Some schools take children from the age of 5, but knowing how to swim is a prerequisite.

ARE THERE ANY COMPETITIONS OTHER THAN THE OLYMPICS?

Yes, the Tahitian Surfing Federation publishes an annual program of competitions open to license holders. In the Tuamotu islands, Rangiroa Pro is a regional open men's professional surfing competition ranked QS 1000 (qualifying series for international competition) with nearly 80 athletes attending. And Teahupo'o hosts the Shiseido Tahiti Pro, that is part of the world championship tour: as the wave is a long way from the beach, you'll need to book a boat or jetski with local service providers from Teahupo'o to attend.

To contact the federation, go to www.federation-surf-tahiti.com
Feel free to call us: +689 87 29 68 76
or to write to us: fedesurf@live.fr

SHOULD I KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR SHARKS WHEN I'M SURFING?

Despite the number of surfers, windsurfers and swimmers, no attack has occurred on a surf spot for over ten years. The species present in Polynesia are not aggressive and do not seek contact with humans. Polynesia has chosen to let sharks, as well as marine mammals, rays and turtles, evolve in their natural environment: these totem animals have been protected for over twenty years.

CAN YOU COMBINE SAILING AND SURFING WHEN YOU COME TO TAHITI?

Absolutely: Nautical charter companies offer tailor-made stays, from island to island for example, taking your equipment on board and providing their dinghy to access the spots. See examples of charters on [our website](#).

USEFUL TIPS

WE SHOW RESPECT

Nature is not an amusement park, and the ocean is sacred in our tradition. Don't impose yourself on the surf spots and respect the local surfers. The best thing to do is to spend some time with them, and then they can take you with them to the spot. Once you're there, be polite: say hello or *'la ora na*.

ASSESS YOUR LEVEL WELL

A wave can be splendid at first glance, but do you know the currents or the depths? Don't hesitate to ask for information and guidance. And don't overestimate yourself - it's a matter of safety.

CONSULT THE SURFING WEATHER FORECAST

Especially if you've decided to hit the road to catch a wave. Many apps and sites are available: Surfreport, Allosurf, Windy...

CHECK YOUR EQUIPMENT

Have the right board (*longboard, fishboard, shortboard, malibu, even paddle*) for the session and your level: this is the minimum required to feel comfortable and have fun. When in doubt, ask the locals!

FOLLOW THE RULES OF PRIORITY

We don't impose ourselves on the wave, we wait for our turn.

- 1: don't go straight for the peak.
- 2: priority goes to whoever's furthest inside the wave.
- 3: once you've taken the wave - or lost it - wait your turn again for the next one..

DON'T OVERLOAD THE SPOT

Too many people? Wait an hour or two. Or look for another spot.

DON'T BRAG ON SOCIAL NETWORKS...

...especially if local surfers have shown you a «*secret spot*» they want to preserve.

DON'T LEAVE ANY GARBAGE (OR PEHU)...

...on the spot. If you'd like to help preserve the site, get in touch with ocean protection associations (e.g. Project Rescue Ocean), surfing associations (e.g. Aimeho Surf Association in Moorea) or the local town hall.

A fa'ahe'e maita'i,
good surfing everyone!



TAHITI

TOURISME

www.TahitiTourisme.travel