

Mo'orea

This is the island paradise you've been daydreaming about all winter: mountains that leap almost vertically out of the clear lagoon, lush vegetation, restaurants serving the freshest fish, stylish accommodation and a languid pace of life. Splash around in the shallows of the aqua lagoon, 'walk' along the sea bed, snorkel, cycle, hike, horse ride...When you have to leave, you'll be kicking and screaming.

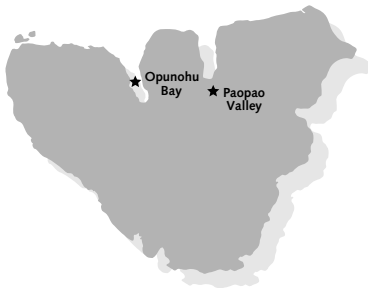
Transport to Mo'orea from Tahiti is absurdly easy, so you've no excuse but to spend a day or two at the very least on this veritable gem of an island. If idling away the days ceases to do it for you, there are challenging walks, scuba diving, snorkelling and interesting *marae* (sacred sites) that will keep you entertained.

Mo'orea remains seductive to artists, disenfranchised *popaa* (Westerners) and Tahitians, many of whom treat Mo'orea as a weekender *par excellence*. Although the island retains a palpable air of traditional Polynesia, and locals pride themselves on having avoided the jam-packed development of Bora Bora, the island is dominated by tourism. But, you can still tuck a *tiare* (fragrant white flower) behind your ear, jump on a bicycle and head south, where hotels are rare and islanders eke out a quiet existence.

Live it up in style or visit on the cheap: the island has a good choice of deluxe hotels, but travellers on all budgets can find comfortable places to rest their weary limbs after a day of sunburnt fun.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Exploring the magnificent **Opunohu Bay** (p116) area with its sparkling waters, vertical peaks and ancient *marae*
- Swimming with and feeding the island's rubbery **stingrays** (p121)
- Sighting **whales and dolphins** (p119) from the months of July to October
- Devouring sweet, juicy pineapples, fresh from the island's plantations in the **Paopao Valley** (p116)
- Getting the blood pumping on a guided hike in the fecund **interior** (p119)



■ POPULATION: 14,230

■ AREA: 53 SQ KM

MO'OREA IN...

Two Days

Head to **Temae Beach** (p115) for a dip in that dreamy water and a lounge on the beach. Continue on to **Jus de Fruits de Moorea** (p116) for some juice or midmorning *eau de vie* before exploring the **Opunohu Valley** (p118) with its fascinating *marae* and extraordinary views. Stop for a late, leisurely lunch at **Hauru Point** (p117) before cooling off with another relaxing dip. Finish the day with dinner and ray watching at **Restaurant Te Honu Iti** (p125).

Fill day two with a **lagoon tour** (p121) and picnic lunch. After a long day in the sun, have a quiet dinner at your hotel or *pension*.

Four Days

Start the third day with a morning guided **hike** or **horse ride** (p121). After lunch the afternoon is yours to lounge on the beach or explore the quiet southern part of the island. Later, treat yourself to a **dance performance** (p126) for a night of French Polynesian entertainment and feasting.

On your last day on Mo'orea you could either take a **4WD tour** (p121) or go **whale-watching** (p119). Then spend the rest of the day soaking up the warm water and sunshine, and go out for a night of Tex-Mex and live music at **Maria@Tapas** (p126).

HISTORY

The island's ancient name was Aimeho (sometimes spelled Eimeo). Some say that Mo'orea, which means 'yellow lizard', was the name of one of the island's ruling families, while others attribute this name to an image seen by a high priest while visiting the island.

Mo'orea was heavily populated before the Europeans arrived on its idyllic doorstep. Samuel Wallis was the first European to sight the island (1767), and he was soon followed by Louis-Antoine de Bougainville (1768) and James Cook (1769). The missionaries arrived on the scene in the early 1800s and made themselves at home, soon establishing their headquarters on the island. As elsewhere, European diseases and the introduction of weapons and alcohol had a disastrous effect on the population of Mo'orea, which continued to decline during the 19th century.

Copra and vanilla were crops important in the past but these days Mo'orea is the pineapple-growing centre of French Polynesia. Tourism is the other major industry. Development on Mo'orea is an unstoppable beast, but the island has managed to maintain a tranquillity that its more-developed neighbours, Tahiti and Bora Bora, lack.

GEOGRAPHY & GEOLOGY

Mo'orea is an extinct volcano. Cook's Bay (Baie de Cook) and Opunohu Bay (Baie d'Opunohu) mark the floor of the ancient crater, and if you follow the trail from the

Opunohu Valley up to Three Coconut Trees Pass, you stand very clearly on the knife edge of the old crater rim.

The island is shaped like an equilateral triangle, its point downwards, with two bites taken out of the top side. The bites are the two magnificent bays. A reef encircles the island with a narrow and shallow lagoon. There are a number of passes through the reef, particularly at Vaiare on the east coast.

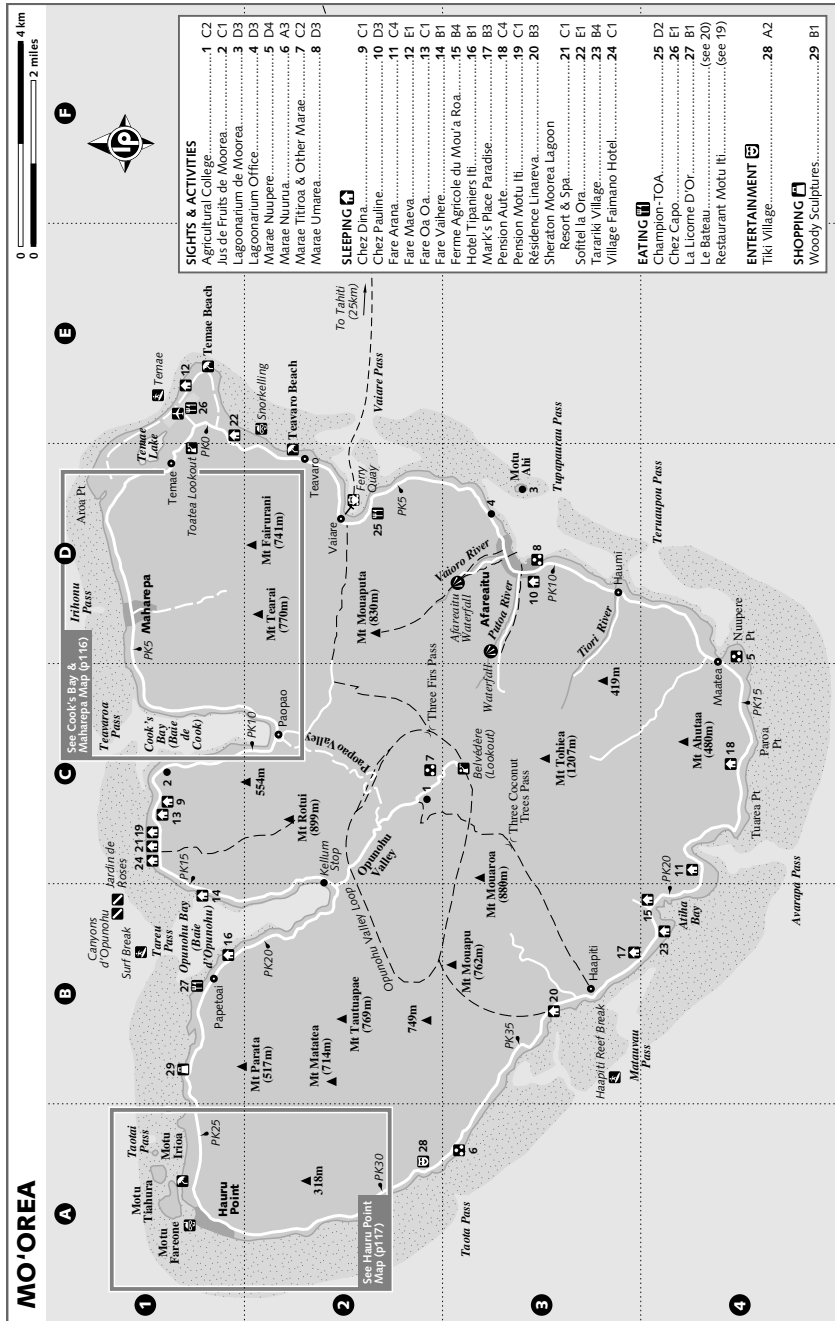
Mo'orea is very mountainous, and its peaks are often theatrically draped in cloud. Mt Rotui (899m) tumbles into Opunohu Bay on one side and Cook's Bay on the other, only 2.5km apart. Mt Mouaputa (830m), which is known as the 'pierced mountain', is famed for the hole through its top.

The largely impenetrable interior is covered in dense forests of *mape*, the gigantic chestnut trees of Polynesia.

There are pretty white-sand beaches at Hauru Point and Temae but nothing sweeping or spectacular. The draw card, as is true for most of French Polynesia, is the limpid, warm water of the vibrant lagoon.

ORIENTATION

The coastal road that rings the island measures about 60km right around. Depending on your energy and fitness level, the circuit can be made by bicycle in one very long, sweaty day (there are, thankfully, few hills to tackle). The southern coast of the island is far more isolated and sees much less traffic. If your hire car or bicycle is going to break down, this is probably where it will do so!



The population of Mo'orea is concentrated in the villages around the coast. With its frenetic ferry quay, Vaiare is the busiest part of the island, but Afareaitu is the administrative headquarters.

Dense tourist development is in two strips: one from Maharepa down the eastern side of Cook's Bay to Paopao, the other around Hauru Point on the northwestern corner of the island. The airport is in the island's northeastern corner.

Adhering to French Polynesian logic, the *pointe kilométrique* (PK; kilometre point) markers start at PK0 at the airport and go around the coast in both clockwise and anticlockwise directions; they meet at Haapiti (which is at PK24 along the southern – clockwise – route and at PK37 along the northern – anticlockwise – route).

INFORMATION
Internet Access

It costs around 500 CFP for half an hour online. Some of the hotels also offer Internet service.

Maria@Tapas (Map p116; ☎ 55 01 70; mariatapas@mail.pf; PK5; ☎ 8am-11pm Mon-Wed, 8am-1am Thu-Sat) Fast connections and friendly staff.

Restaurant Iguane Rock Café (Map p117; ☎ 56 17 16; ☎ until midnight)

Tiki@Net (Map p117; ☎ 56 39 42; ☎ until about 6pm) Out the back of Le Patio restaurant.

Medical Services

Your hotel should be your first point of call if you need medical assistance.

Moorea Hospital (☎ 56 23 23, 56 24 24) The only hospital is in Afareaitu.

Pharmacy (☎ 56 10 51; PK6.5; ☎ 7.30am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon & 3.30-6pm Sat, 8-11am Sun & public holidays) In Maharepa, not far from the Centre Kikipa.

Pharmacy (PK31; ☎ Mon-Sat & Sun morning)

Money

The Banque Socredo across from the quay at Vaiare has an ATM. There are banks and ATMs clustered around the small shopping centre in Maharepa near PK6. In Le Petit Village (the Hauru Point shopping centre) there is a Banque de Polynésie as well as an ATM.

The rates are generally not as good here as on Tahiti, so consider changing or withdrawing money before you arrive.

Post

Mo'orea's other post office is in Papetoai, just before Hauru Point.

Post office (Map p116; ☎ 7.30am-noon & 1.30-4pm Mon-Thu, 7.30am-3pm Fri, 7.30-9.30am Sat) At the Maharepa shopping centre.

Tourist Information

Mo'orea Tourist Bureau (Map p117; ☎ 56 29 09; Hauru Point; ☎ 8am-4pm Tue-Thu, 8am-3pm Fri, 8am-noon Sat) Located in front of Le Petit Village shopping centre. On Monday you can call ☎ 56 38 53 for information.

SIGHTS

The following circuit starts at the airport and moves in an anticlockwise direction, following the northern PK markers.

For places to stay and eat in the following places, see p121 and p125.

Temae (PK1)

The village of Temae, which is located well inland from the coast – unusual in Polynesia – has long been famed for its dancers. If you manage to time your visit with the July Heiva festivities you may well see dancers from this village performing on Tahiti. For more information on Tahitian dance see p46.

Teavaro & Temae Beaches (PK1 to PK0)

The best beaches on the east coast stretch from Teavaro round to the airport. The Sofitel la Ora hotel occupies Teavaro Beach, where there's good snorkelling in the shallow water. Temae Beach is close to the end of the airport runway and is a pleasant stretch of sand, though it gets crowded on weekends.

A road on the lagoon side of the runway extends around **Temae Lake**, almost to Aroa Point, but the route is cut off by the swampy inlet so it is not possible to rejoin the main coastal road.

Maharepa (PK4 to PK5)

The early-20th-century **Maison Blanche** (PK5) is a fine example of a *fare vanira*, a plantation house from Mo'orea's vanilla-boom era. Located just past the Moorea Pearl Resort, the Maison Blanche is now a souvenir shop. It has a fairly typical selection of *pareu* (sarongs) and Balinese wood carvings.

Cook's Bay to Paopao (PK6 to PK9)

The spectacular Cook's Bay is something of a misnomer because Cook actually anchored in Opunohu Bay. With Mt Rotui as a backdrop, Cook's Bay is a lovely stretch of water; it is also one of Mo'orea's main tourist destinations. There's no real centre to Cook's Bay; shops, restaurants and hotels are simply dotted along the road. As you head east, Cook's Bay merges with Maharepa.

At the base of Cook's Bay is the sleepy village of Paopao. There's the **old fish market** and a few shops here. Even though the fish market is no more, you can still see the wall mural painted by Mo'orea-based artist François Ravello.

Settlements are creeping up the Paopao Valley but the principal activity is still agriculture, with many hectares of pineapple plantations. The road leading inland from Paopao and Cook's Bay meets the Opunohu Valley road, just before the agricultural college and the walking track up to the Three Coconut Trees Pass (see p120). A small *fare* at the agricultural college sells delicious ice creams and jams in local flavours. The road

then continues inland and up to the *marae* sites and finally to the *belvédère* (lookout) on the slopes of Mt Tohia (1207m).

Jus de Fruits de Moorea (PK11)

About 300m inland from the coastal road, the **Jus de Fruits de Moorea** (Map p114; ☎ 56 11 33; admission free; ☎ 8.30am-4.30pm Mon-Sat) is a welcome, thirst-quenching stop, particularly if you have been riding a bike around the island. The various fruit liqueurs won't do you much good (although they are delicious), but a bottle of 100% pineapple juice (320 CFP) is the perfect tonic.

Opunohu Bay (PK14 to PK18)

Magnificent Opunohu Bay feels wonderfully fresh and isolated. The coastal road rounds Mt Rotui, and at about PK14 turns inland along the eastern side of Opunohu Bay. There is less development along here than around Cook's Bay, and it's one of the more tranquil and eye-catching spots on the island. Most of the Polynesian scenes in the 1984 movie *Bounty* were shot on Opunohu Bay.

Kellum Stop (☎ 56 18 52; PK17.5) is almost at the seat of the bay; a small sign on the mountain side of the road indicates the turn-off. In 1925, Medford Kellum came to French Polynesia with six scientists from the Bishop Museum in Hawaii. Kellum ended up buying land in the Opunohu Valley, which facilitated the team's early archaeological investigations on Mo'orea. The Kellums' daughter Marimari still sometimes conducts personal tours around the gardens of her house, which are dense with local plants and flowers. Visitors are welcome, but try to call ahead; a stroll around the garden costs 500 CFP.

At PK18, just past Kellum Stop, a road turns off inland along the Opunohu Valley to the valley *marae*, the *belvédère* and the walking route to Three Coconut Trees Pass.

Papetoai (PK22)

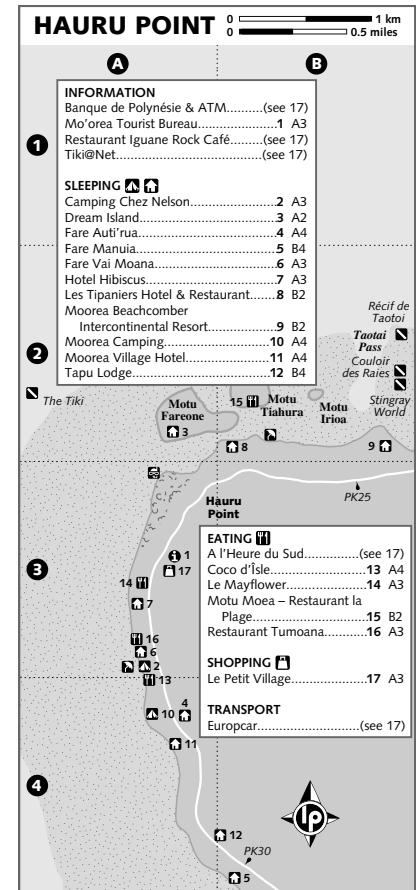
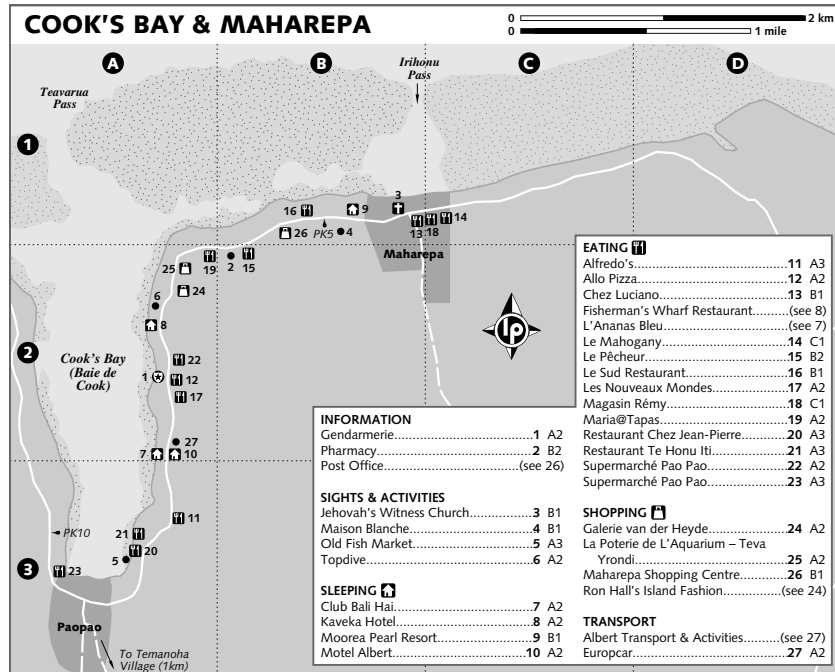
A busy little village with a post office and a number of restaurants, Papetoai was established as the Pacific headquarters of the London Missionary Society (LMS) in 1811. In the 1870s, the missionaries constructed an octagonal **church** at Papetoai; today this is the oldest-standing European building in the South Pacific. As was often the case, the missionaries deliberately built this church atop an old *marae*. A single spike-like stone is the sole reminder of the ancient **Marae Taputapuataea**, dedicated to the god 'Oro.

Hauru Point (PK25 to PK30)

The coastal road rounds Hauru Point, the northwestern corner of the island, between PK25 and PK30. This is one of the island's major tourist enclaves. The tourist strip starts with the Moorea Beachcomber Intercontinental Resort at about PK25, and finishes at around PK31.

Hauru Point has one of the best **beaches** on the island, a narrow but sandy stretch that extends for about 5km. All beaches are public property in French Polynesia and the hotel proprietors do not seem to mind if you walk through their grounds.

Immediately offshore are **Motu Tiahura** and **Motu Fareone**, attractive little islets so close to the shore you can easily swim out to them and enjoy fine snorkelling on the way. A little further east is the tiny **Motu Iriaia**. Remember that the actual *motu* are private (although the littoral areas aren't).



Marae Nuurua (PK31.5)

Marae Nuurua (Map p114) is right on the water's edge, just past the end of a football field. There's an impressive wall of coral boulders and a restored three-level structure flanked by twin spiky, upright stones with clear **petroglyphs**. Despite neglect and its relatively populated setting, it's a very evocative ruin, overgrown with vegetation and surrounded by coconut trees.

Haapiti to Atiha Bay (PK30 to PK20)

The largest village on the west coast, Haapiti is home to the huge twin-towered Catholic **Église de la Sainte Famille**, which is made of coral and lime. Haapiti's **Matauvau Pass** has a popular surf break.

Mo'orea's lazy west-coast atmosphere continues right round to Atiha Bay (Baie d'Atiha), a quiet fishing village that also attracts surfers.

Marae Nuupere (PK14)

Nuupere Point is immediately southeast of Maatea village, and the *marae* stands just 100m or so south of the point. All that remains is a massive coastal cairn of coral boulders, which is on private property. The property owner is not enthusiastic about visitors, so permission must be obtained before entering the property (ask at the tourist bureau in Hauru Point).

Afareaitu (PK10)

Afareaitu is the island's administrative centre, but don't blink or you'll miss it. Chez Pauline, the village's hotel, has a collection of ancient stone *tiki* and other traditional artefacts. Only about 100m south of Chez Pauline is **Marae Umarea**, which is thought to date from about AD 900 and is the oldest *marae* on the island. Take the road that goes straight to the coast to see the *marae*, which is a long wall of coral boulders right along the waterfront.

Afareaitu's two **waterfalls** are a major island attraction (although they are but feeble trickles in winter). There are a few short walks available.

Vaiare (PK4)

The constant toing and froing of ferry boats and high-speed catamarans at the ferry quay, the busy market scene and the cars, taxis and *le trucks* shuttling visitors around render the 100m or so near the dock area the busiest patch of real estate on Mo'orea.

Vaiare is the starting point for the interesting walk across the ridge to Paopao and Cook's Bay; see p120.

Paopao & Opunohu Valleys

From Mo'orea's two great bays, valleys sweep inland, meeting south of the coastal bulk of Mt Rotui. In the pre-European era the valleys were densely populated and the Opunohu Valley was dotted with *marae*, some of which have been restored and maintained. The great *marae* sites of Titiroa and Afareaito were extensively reconstructed by Dr Yoshihiko Shinoto in 1967. All *marae* seem to attract mosquitoes and

these are no exception. Bring insect repellent or expect to have difficulty withstanding their onslaught while you read the information boards!

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

The Opunohu Valley has some of the most important and numerous *marae* in French Polynesia. Unusually, you can walk to them along marked tracks and there are explanatory panels in French and English. The complex includes a range of partially restored remains including family and communal *marae* as well as dwellings, archery platforms and other structures.

It's believed the valley was continuously inhabited for six centuries, and the oldest surviving structures date from the 13th century. This agricultural community reached its apogee in the 17th and 18th centuries. The first excavations date from 1925. In 1960, Roger Green carried out the most complete research on the area, and 500 structures have been inventoried. See p23 for more information on *marae*.

MARAE TITIROA & OTHER MARAE

Past the agricultural college, the valley road comes to a parking area beside the huge Maraé Titiroa, on the edge of a dense forest of magnificent *mape* (chestnut) trees. From the *marae* a walking track leads to the *tohua* (council platform), and two smaller *marae*.

From there the track continues to the **Marae Ahu-o-Mahine**, a more recent *marae* of individually hewn, round stones with an imposing three-stepped *ahu* (altar). You can cross the small watercourse running down the valley to discover other, more modest *marae*.

A short distance along the road from Maraé Titiroa is **Marae Afareaito**. Although there is a walking path between the two, it is not easy to follow; the main road is an easier route. The large *marae* has a small, raised-terrace *ahu*, and back rests that were used by the priests. It is flanked by two crescent-shaped archery platforms from which competing archers would shoot their arrows down a cleared range.

BELVÉDÈRE

Beyond Maraé Afareaito the road continues to climb steeply, winding its way up to the *belvédère*. This lookout offers superb

views of Mt Rotui, which splits the two bays, and back to the towering mountains that rise in the centre of the island and that once formed the southern rim of the ancient crater.

ACTIVITIES

It is wise to book activities as soon as you arrive on the island; contact organisers directly or check with your hotel or guesthouse. Many of the bigger hotels have activities desks.

Water Activities

Prepare yourself for soggy fingers and toes: on Mo'orea you'll probably spend as much time in the water as out of it. There are several beaches that are ideal for swimming, and you can even swim across to the two *motu* north of Hauru Point. For the best **snorkelling**, join an organised lagoon tour. The island's excellent **surfing** is for advanced to experienced surfers; for more details see the boxed text, below.

Aqua Blue (☎ 56 53 53; fax 56 42 51; aquablue_pf@hotmail.com; 6500 CFP), at the Moorea Beach-

comber Intercontinental Resort, offers an excursion that allows you to walk along the sea bed in relatively shallow water wearing a weighted helmet into which air is pumped. A diving monitor accompanies you and, since you actually walk on the bottom, you don't even need to be able to swim.

Dolphin Quest (☎ 55 19 48; adult/child 17,000/10,000 CFP) is a 'shallow-water encounter' with captive dolphins in an enclosure at the Moorea Beachcomber Intercontinental Resort. Snorkelling with dolphins is 19,000 CFP.

If you're looking for a more adventurous approach, Dr Michael Poole, world specialist on South Pacific marine mammals, leads **dolphin- and whale-watching expeditions** (☎ 56 14 70, 77 50 07; tours 6500 CFP; ☹ Mon & Thu), where you observe and occasionally swim with whales and dolphins.

To the north of the island, there is some great **diving** for beginners and more experienced divers; sites include the Tiki, Opunohu Canyons, Taotai and the Roses (for details about sites see p55). The island has a number of dive centres, including the following.

Bathy's Club (☎ 56 31 44, 55 19 39; www.dive-moorea.com). At Moorea Beachcomber Intercontinental Resort.

Moorea Fun Dive (☎ /fax 56 40 38; www.moorea-fundive.com; PK26.7)

Moorea Blue Diving (Map p116; ☎ 55 17 04, 74 59 99; www.mooreabluediving.com; Moorea Pearl Resort & Spa)

Scubapiti (Map p117; ☎ 56 20 38, 78 03 52; www.scubapiti.com; PK24; Les Tipaniers Hotel & Restaurant) Only dive centre that refuses to engage in shark-feeding.

Topdive (Map p116; ☎ 56 17 32; www.topdive.com; Cook's Bay)

Cycling

Mo'orea is a great island to cycle around. Doing the 60km circuit in a day is possible (depending on the state of those thighs), although tiring, particularly given the rather sorry state of the bikes available. Many of the hotels have bikes for their guests to use for around 1500 to 1900 CFP for a full day. Bike and vehicle hire is available from **Europcar** (Map p116; ☎ 56 34 00; europcar-moorea@mail.pf).

Hiking

Exhilarating hikes of varying difficulty tackle the lush inland areas and are a great way to get the blood pumping. Some of the trails are infrequently used and poorly marked, so it's wise to use a guide. Hikes include the

MO'OREA'S TOP SURF SPOTS

- **Temae reef break** (Year-round, depending on the winds) Unusual as it isn't at a pass. The break is a right and appears where a recess and the curvature of the reef combine perfectly. A wave for experienced surfers.
- **Paopao (Cook's Bay) & Opunohu Bay reef break** (November to April) A magnificent setting. Look for the left at Paopao, the right and left at Opunohu.
- **Moorea Beachcomber Intercontinental Resort reef break** (June to October) Not far from the hotel's beach. A difficult left which can be dangerous if there is a big swell, because of the narrowness of the pass and the strong currents that run through it.
- **Haapiti reef break** (May to October) The left at Haapiti is a must. It combines the regularity and strength of the reef waves with the security of the beach waves. There's a reasonable depth at the takeoff point.

Vaiare–Paopao route, Three Coconut Trees Pass and the Opunohu Valley.

VAIARE TO PAOPAO

This interesting and reasonably easy walk takes about two hours, starting from Vaiare and climbing to the ridge between Mt Tearai (770m) and Mt Mouaputa (830m) before dropping down into the valley and emerging at Paopao on Cook's Bay. There are great views, and dense vegetation cloaks the steep mountains.

From the ferry quay in the centre of Vaiare, walk south across the first bridge and turn inland along the road beside the Chez Méno store. There are two intersections: take the right fork on both occasions. Don't take the next right turn but keep following the road, which deteriorates to a muddy track as it passes through plantations of pineapples, taro, papaya and bananas and climbs up above the south bank of the river. Do not follow the track to its conclusion; it follows the river to an eventual dead end. Instead, look for a walking track, which turns sharply off the vehicle track just before it becomes too narrow for a 4WD.

Finding the start of the track is this walk's most difficult part. There may be a red arrow painted on a pole on the opposite (river) side of the vehicle track, or you may just have to cast around until you find the trail markers (splashes of red paint on trees).

The walking track climbs steeply uphill and can be slippery after rain, but once you've found it it's easy to follow. Eventually the track emerges on the ridge between the two peaks. Follow the ridge uphill a short way to a rock with a wonderful view of Tahiti and of the pineapple plantations in the valley below. Towering above is the spectacular peak of Mt Mouaputa, the mountain with the 'hole' through it.

The track drops very steeply, but handy vines and creepers make the descent fairly simple. The track passes through a thicket of bamboo and crosses a river before emerging on the flat valley floor.

It's much easier to do this walk in the direction Vaiare to Paopao.

THREE COCONUT TREES PASS

This is an exhilarating climb. It's hard, sweaty work but the payoff is superb views from the ridge separating Mt Mouaroa

(880m) from Mt Tohicia (1207m). There are not, however, three coconut trees – two were actually blown down in an early-1980s cyclone.

Start the Three Coconut Trees Pass walk by taking the inland road from Opunohu Bay towards Marae Titiroa and the *belvédère*. Shortly after the Cook's Bay road joins the route, and before the agricultural college, another road turns to the right. There is a sign that points the way to the '*Vue de Roto Nui et du Marae*' and a much smaller and rather obscure pictogram of three coconut trees. Follow the turn-off road a couple of hundred metres to its end and park just before the pig farm.

The walking path, with its red trail markers, continues straight on from the road; it drops down to a small stream then climbs up the other side, through ferns, with the ridge and the coconut tree clearly visible to the right.

The route takes a sharp turn and drops steeply down to a wider river. Cross this river but don't go straight up the other side. The path now follows the river, and crosses it half-a-dozen times as it tumbles down through a dark and magnificent *mape* forest. Eventually the walking trail diverges from the river and heads up the hill. If you're uncertain whether you're still on the correct route, search for the red markers. If you go far without them, you're lost.

Higher up the hill the markers seem to fade but bits of plastic tied to branches help. Clearings are the easiest places to get lost; each time you exit one, make sure you're on the right trail. A clearing closer to the top can cause confusion, but there's a marker on a big, mossy rock off to the right of the clearing.

The final climb to the top of the knife-edge ridge is a real root-hanger, but you emerge from the undergrowth to unobstructed views on the way up.

Trodden-down barbed wire along the ridge line shows where a fence once ran. Follow the ridge to the right (west) for the best views over the bays (and all the way to Tetiaroa on a clear day).

Keep an eye out for the route markers on your way down. It's even easier to lose them when you're walking fast and possibly paying less attention.

OPUNOHU VALLEY LOOP

This one-day walk starts at the agricultural college. After climbing up to Three Coconut Trees Pass, follow the ridge line through undergrowth of *mape* and *purau* until you get to the *belvédère* (about 1½ hours). From there, it's about 45 minutes to Three Firs Pass, with superb views of Cook's Bay and Opunohu Bay as you face the ridge of Mt Rotui. This section presents no particular difficulties, apart from a short, steep rise just before the pass. The last stage is the return to the agricultural college, about 1¾ hours. After a steep descent you come to the basin of the caldera (volcano crater). Approaching the college you pass through banana plantations, a pine forest and coffee trees.

Horse-Riding

Ranch Opunohu Valley (☎ 56 28 55; rides 5000 CFP; ☹ Tue-Sun) Two-hour guided rides into the island's interior are available mornings and afternoons.

Other Activities

ATV tours are the new rage on Mo'orea. These 4WD buggies built for two are a fun but expensive way to see some rugged interior areas. Two-hour tours are available from **ATV Moorea Tour** (☎ 56 16 60; tours 14,000 CFP) and **Mahana ATV Tours** (☎ 55 10 19; tours 15,000 CFP).

Deep-sea fishing can be organised through **Moorea Fishing Charters** (☎ 77 02 19; half-day per person 15,000 CFP). There is a four-person minimum but private and full-day tours can also be arranged.

Parasailing, water-skiing and wave-runner lagoon tours can be booked through **Mahana Tours** (☎ 56 20 44; tours 1000-2500 CFP).

MO'OREA FOR CHILDREN

Don't hesitate to bring the whole family to this island, as Mo'orea is particularly kid friendly. If they ever tire of just splashing around, then hiking, horse-riding and exploring the lagoon are fun activities.

A great day trip to Motu Ahi is offered by **Lagoonarium de Moorea** (Map p114; ☎ 78 31 15; www.lagoomoorea.com; adult/child 2300/1500 CFP). There are coral gardens, turtles, rays and an underwater viewing room where you can see all the underwater action without even getting wet – you can also plunge right in if that's what you are after. Tariffs include transfer, snorkelling equipment and kayak use.

TOURS Lagoon Tours

The best way to discover Mo'orea's magnificent lagoon is by joining a lagoon excursion. Tours typically visit the two bays, stop to feed the sharks, feed and swim with the rays at Stingray World, and picnic and snorkel on Motu Fareone. If you are on a budget, check out **Moorea Camping** (Map p117; ☎ 56 14 47), which offers a three-hour trip of shark- and ray-feeding, and *motu* visit for 2500 CFP. Plenty of other operators are available for longer tours that include lunch; check at your accommodation.

4WD Tours

Several operators organise island tours aboard open 4WDs. There are complete tours of the island with visits to the archaeological sites in the Opunohu Valley, stops at the *belvédère* and the Afareaitu waterfalls, and visits to pineapple and vanilla plantations and the fruit-juice factory. The three-hour tours cost around 5000 CFP per person and are good value if you're by yourself or don't want to rent a car. Check that you share a language with the guide.

Albert Transport & Activities (☎ 56 13 53; fax 56 40 58; alberttransport@mail.pf)

Inner Island Safari Tours (☎ 56 20 09; inner-saf@mail.pf)

Tefaarahi Safari Tours (☎ 78 82 61)

Torea Nui Safari (☎ 56 12 48; fax 56 15 05)

What to Do on Moorea (☎ 56 57 66; www.magicmoorea.com)

SLEEPING

Mo'orea is a tranquil pleasure – there is no roaring traffic (but plenty of roaring mosquitos – whip out that tropical-strength repellent!) and even the budget places have lovely garden settings.

Most accommodation is concentrated on the eastern side of Cook's Bay and around Hauru Point. Both these centres are very spread out; if you're staying at one end and want to eat at the other, it's not a case of just wandering a few steps along the road.

Mo'orea has superb over-water bungalows and luxury accommodation, but it also has the best selection of budget (by local standards!) *pensions* in French Polynesia. There are camp sites and dorm facilities, quaint and artistic little *pensions*, some cheaper hotels and a host of local-style

bungalow complexes that generally have a small kitchen.

Note that while most places will supply sheets and other bedding, towels are often not provided in the cheapest places. All top-end places and most of the midrange options accept credit cards; most budget places don't.

As elsewhere in the book, we have included the government taxes in the prices cited.

Cook's Bay

Magnificent Cook's Bay does not have any beach, and so is the quieter, less touristy sister to Hauru Point.

Moorea Pearl Resort (Map p116; ☎ 50 84 52; d 27,000-32,000 CFP, garden/beach/over-water bungalows 37,000/55,000/66,000 CFP; 🍷 🍷 🍷) Occupying the site of the old Bali Hai Moorea, this is the most intimate of the international luxury resorts. There's an infinity pool, a little white-sand beach and a good restaurant/bar with a welcoming atmosphere. Practically any activity on Mo'orea can be arranged here.

Motel Albert (Map p116; ☎ 56 12 76; fax 56 58 58; units from 6500 CFP) On the mountain side of the road, Motel Albert looks a little bleak from the outside but is great value on closer inspection. The spacious units (almost mini-houses) sleep three or four and have kitchens and bathrooms with hot water. Staff are welcoming and speak English. If you're preparing your own food, there are several places to shop nearby and there's free grapefruit on offer when it's in season.

Club Bali Hai (Map p116; ☎ 56 13 68; fax 56 13 27; www.clubbalihai.com; d 14,000-27,000 CFP, bungalows 25,000-33,000 CFP; 🍷) Just across from Motel Albert is this stylish, breezy spot with views of Mt Rotui. There's a swimming pool, tennis court and restaurant. This place is very popular with American travellers, and you can still have a drink with one of the American 'Bali Hai boys' for a sundowner and interesting chat about Mo'orea in the 1960s.

Temanoha Village (☎ /fax 56 32 00; www.temanoha.com; d 11,000 CFP; 🍷) In a spectacular mountain-side setting beneath Mt Rotui and in a 2-hectare tropical garden, Temanoha Village has spacious wood and stone bungalows surrounding an inviting pool. Each unit has a living room, bathroom and bedroom. Breakfast, primarily fruit from the planta-

tion, is an extra 1000 CFP. There are bikes for rent. Any activity can be organised but credit cards are not accepted. Each additional person is 2000 CFP.

Kaveka Hotel (Map p116; ☎ 56 50 50; fax 56 52 63; www.hotelkaveka.com; bungalows 12,000-24,000 CFP; 🍷) This place has bungalows with nice stained-glass detail, and is set in a well-tended garden. The hotel's restaurant, the Fisherman's Wharf (p125), is highly recommended.

Cook's Bay to Hauru Point

Pension Motu Iti (Map p114; ☎ 55 05 20; fax 55 05 21; www.pensionmotuiti.com; dm 1700 CFP, garden/beach bungalows 11,000/12,000 CFP; 🍷) The dorms here are the airiest and most pleasant on all of Mo'orea. Rooms are great value, especially the waterfront ones with views of sunrise and sunset.

Fare Oa Oa (Map p114; ☎ 56 25 17; www.fareoaa.com in French; dm/s/d 2500/3500/4500 CFP) A charming, eccentric place on the mountain side of the road. There's not much privacy, but there are as much character and style as you could hope for. There are four rooms that all share a clean bathroom (with hot water) and lovely kitchen area. There's a public phone, and Hervé, *le patron*, even offers free wine and pineapples to guests.

Sheraton Moorea Lagoon Resort & Spa (Map p114; ☎ 55 11 11, reservations ☎ 86 48 49; garden/beach/over-water bungalows 43,000/72,000/81,000 CFP; 🍷 🍷) The resort is on one of the few bits of beach along this strip, which is also a public beach so it's busy during school holidays. Bungalows are exceptionally luxurious and filled with extra details like claw-toed baths.

Fare Vaihere (Map p114; ☎ 56 19 19; www.farevaihere.com; 2-/6-person bungalows 15,000/25,000 CFP; 🍷) A new addition to Mo'orea, the small but well-decorated bungalows sit in an open garden facing the sea; the six-person family bungalow is equipped with a kitchen. There is a communal kitchen for everyone else and free kayaks, snorkelling equipment and bikes are offered.

Village Faimano Hotel (☎ 56 10 20; fax 56 36 47; www.faimanovillage.com in French; bungalows 10,000-15,000 CFP) Old dartboards and woodcarvings hang haphazardly about this eclectically decorated place. It's quiet, on a lovely beach and the owners will be more than happy to leave you alone. Bungalows sleep one to four people or two to six. Reservations are for a three-night minimum.

Chez Dina (Map p114; ☎ 56 10 39; www.pensiondinamoorea.com; 2-/4-/5-person bungalows 6500/7500/8500 CFP) Preparing for a remodel at the time of writing, this friendly place is on the mountain side of the road.

Hotel Tipaniers Iti (☎ 56 12 67; fax 56 29 25; www.lestipaniers.com; bungalow d/q 9000/9800 CFP) Looking out over spectacular Opunohu Bay, this is a quiet spot with an over-the-water dock for lounging but no beach. Bungalows are identical to those at the larger Les Tipaniers at Hauru Point. Guests can participate in the other hotel's activities, and a free shuttle runs to Les Tipaniers Hotel & Restaurant in the evening.

Hauru Point

Unlike Cook's Bay, Hauru Point has a beach; it's pleasant, although rather narrow and can sometimes feel crowded.

Fare Vai Moana (Map p117; ☎ /fax 56 17 14; garden/beach bungalows 14,000/18,000 CFP) This decent option, on the same beach as Camping Chez Nelson, has 13 very comfortable bungalows with refrigerator, mezzanine and bathroom with hot water; each accommodates up to four people. The restaurant overlooks the water and has a good reputation. Credit cards are accepted.

Moorea Village Hotel (Map p117; ☎ 56 10 02; fax 56 22 11; bungalow with/without kitchen from 21,000/12,000 CFP; 🍷) This place was changing ownership at the time of writing and could go through big changes before reopening in mid- to late 2006. The site is superb, with a white-sand beach and a little *motu* in front. You'll find a tennis court, swimming pool, bar and restaurant here.

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Les Tipaniers Hotel & Restaurant (Map p117; ☎ 56 12 67; fax 56 29 25; www.lestipaniers.com; bungalow with/without kitchen from 15,000/9000 CFP) The easy ambience and great beach make this an excellent choice for couples and families. The extremely clean and spacious thatched-roof bungalows have a veranda, small lounge area and bathroom; some have a kitchen. Just about any activity can be organised through the helpful front desk and the restaurant is one of the best on Mo'orea (see p125). Credit cards are accepted.

Tapu Lodge (Map p117; ☎ 55 20 55; fax 56 32 79; www.tapulodge.com in French; 3-/4-/6-person units 15,000/25,000) These enormous, immaculate, modern units are a great deal and have ocean views. They're close enough to the action of Hauru Point but far enough away to be very quiet. The welcoming management offers free trips out to the *motu*. Rates are discounted for longer stays.

Moorea Beachcomber Intercontinental Resort (Map p117; ☎ 55 19 19; fax 55 19 55; www.moorea.interconti.com; d 46,000 CFP, garden/beach/over-water bungalows 52,000/63,000/90,000 CFP; 🍷 🍷) With its beautifully maintained grounds, this is one of the most luxurious hotels on the island. Two very civilised restaurants are located here, and every activity you could imagine is offered, as well as a few you probably couldn't (such as walking along the sea bed with a weighted helmet). The spa here, Helene Spa, is the most respected in French Polynesia.

Hotel Hibiscus (Map p117; ☎ 56 12 20; fax 56 20 69; www.hotel-hibiscus.pf; garden/beach bungalows 15,000/18,000 CFP; 🍷 🍷) A good family choice, this hotel has 29 functional and slightly spartan thatched-roof bungalows in a pleasant garden. They all have three beds, attached hot-water bathroom, veranda and kitchen. Credit cards are accepted.

Camping Chez Nelson (Map p117; ☎ 56 15 18; www.camping-nelson.pf; tent sites per person 1000 CFP, dm/d from 1600/4500 CFP, bungalows 5000 CFP) Accommodation is very basic, and the welcome is sometimes rather cool, but it's on a nice strip of beach. Prices drop if you stay more than one night.

Moorea Camping (Map p117; ☎ 56 14 47; fax 56 30 22; PK27.5; tent sites per person 1100 CFP, dm/d 1500/2500 CFP, bungalows 5000-9000 CFP) Another popular budget option, and also right on the beach, this place is functional and rudimentary. Note that there are no utensils or cooking equipment in the kitchen. Some of the best excursion deals are found at this place (for details see p121).

Fare Auti'rua (Map p117; ☎ 56 14 47; bungalows 7500 CFP) This is the more upmarket section of Moorea Camping, offering comfortable and spacious bungalows with mezzanine, bathrooms and equipped kitchens. Guests can access the beach via Moorea Camping. Credit cards are accepted.

Fare Manuia (Map p117; ☎ 56 26 17; fax 56 10 30; 4-/6-person bungalows 11,000/16,000 CFP) Six bungalows

are spaced out in a somewhat barren garden, by a sunny stretch of beach. All have bathrooms with hot water, kitchens, TVs and large verandas. You'll find a washing machine, a *pirogue* for free use and a kayak that can be rented. There's a two-night minimum stay.

Haapiti to Afareaitu

Tarariki Village (Map p114; ☎ 55 21 05; fax 55 21 06; pensiontarariki@mail.pf; dm/d per person 2000/2500 CFP, bungalow 5500-7500 CFP) The friendly, family atmosphere in a quiet, green location and the nautical Polynesian architecture make this the kind of place where you quickly lose track of the days. There are miniature cabins with two beds and a bathroom (cold water only), spartan dorms and a Robinson Crusoe-style thatched bungalow perched in a tree. In the middle of the property is a superb *fare potee* (open dining area), which is used as a communal kitchen. Because of its proximity to Haapiti's Matauvau Pass, this place is popular with surfers.

Mark's Place Paradise (Map p114; ☎ 56 43 02, 78 93 65; www.marks-place-paradise.com; camping per person 1100 CFP, dm/bungalows from 2000/6000 CFP; 📺) The open, well-planted garden and friendly staff make this the best camping option on Mo'orea. It's away from the beach but the dorms and bungalows are architecturally pleasing and tastefully decorated. Mark, the American owner, really goes out of his way to ensure his guests are offered a myriad of activities at affordable prices. Credit cards are accepted.

Fare Arana (Map p114; ☎ 56 44 03; www.farearana.com; d 1700 CFP; 📺 📺) This hilltop place is quite stylish. The gardens have a Southeast Asian flavour while the comfortable two-storey rooms have French touches. There are magnificent views, loads of flowers and convivial staff. Specials are often available from the website.

Pension Aute (Map p114; ☎ /fax 56 45 19; www.pensionaute.com; bungalows 11,000-15,000 CFP) This *pension* has an amazing position on the wild southern side of the island and a variety of spacious bungalows for three to six people. All bungalows are very well equipped (they even have washing machines and TVs).

Chez Pauline (Map p114; ☎ 56 11 26; d 6000 CFP) Opened by Pauline Teariki's mother in 1918, this was for many years the only hotel on the island. Although it most definitely lacks the comforts of a modern hotel, it has

historic charm and offers a real opportunity to sample local life. There are seven rooms, sharing two bathrooms with cold water; breakfast is included in the price. The restaurant specialises in Tahitian cuisine.

Dream Island (☎ 56 38 81; www.dream-island.com; bungalows 35,000-53,000 CFP) A three-minute boat ride from Haapiti brings you to this superbly located, exclusive, island paradise. The three houses/bungalows were built using local materials in authentic Polynesian style and are equipped with kitchens and phones. All activities are offered. There is a four-night minimum and credit cards are accepted.

Ferme Agricole du Mou'a Roa (Map p114; ☎ 56 58 62; fax 56 40 47; ferme.mouaroa@mail.pf; half/full board per person 8500/10,000 CFP) The clean and simple colonial-style house has eight rooms with four to six beds in each. A bed only is 3200 CFP per person. This friendly place is a hiker's dream and doubles as a kid's summer camp. Call ahead to be picked up, as you need a 4WD to access the farm.

Residence Linareva (Map p114; ☎ 55 05 65; fax 55 05 67; www.linareva.com; 1-/2-/4-person bungalows from 9000/11,000/23,000 CFP; 📺) This option has very pleasant and well-furnished bungalows in a lush garden by the beach. Bicycles, *pirogues* and snorkelling equipment are all provided free of charge. If you don't mind the isolated location and the sometimes stand-offish reception, it's a great place to stay. The floating restaurant here, Le Bateau, has a good reputation (see p126). Credit cards are accepted.

Temae

Sofitel la Ora (Map p114; ☎ 55 03 55; fax 56 12 91; beach/garden/over-water bungalows from 25,000/33,000/59,000 CFP; 📺 📺) Looking across to Tahiti from Temae Beach, just 2km south of Mo'orea's airport, this place sits pretty on one of the island's best beaches. It was planning to close for extensive renovations at the time of writing. All the activities you could dream of are offered.

Fare Maeva (Map p114; ☎ /fax 56 18 10; faremaeva.moorea@mail.pf; bungalows 7000 CFP) This charming, isolated place is dominated by coconut trees and coral gravel, giving it an atoll flavour. All the tidy, well-decorated bungalows have a bathroom and kitchen and the beach is only 200m away. Finding this place is quite a feat – follow the signs to the Golden Nugget; Fare Maeva is about 150m further on.

EATING

Although Mo'orea is not quite the epicurean delight that Tahiti is, you will certainly eat well here. Cook's Bay and Hauru Point are the dining epicentres.

Most places close around 9pm, Monday to Saturday, and on Sunday the options can be surprisingly bleak. Nearly every place is open for lunch and dinner unless otherwise noted.

Restaurants & Cafés

MAHAREPA & COOK'S BAY

Restaurant Te Honu Iti (Map p116; ☎ 56 19 84; mains 1600-3500 CFP) The terrace of this place sits over the water, and at night the water is lit up so you can watch rays and fish pottering about below you – so much entertainment you could almost neglect the stylish food. It's in a lovely building that at night glows like a Christmas tree.

Le Pêcheur (Map p116; ☎ 56 36 12; mains 2000-4000 CFP) A seafood and steak house on the mountain side of the road. Splurge on the giant French-style shellfish platters for two (8500 to 13,000 CFP). Wafts of salty sea air mingle with the great food.

Le Sud Restaurant (Map p116; ☎ 56 42 95; lesud.moorea@mail.pf; mains 1100-2500 CFP; 📺 lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sun) The airy French-plantation décor and good food (though portions are a bit small) make this a good choice.

Chez Luciano (Map p116; ☎ 56 15 20; pizzas 2000 CFP) Catering to hungry French Polynesian families, this place serves giant pizzas (plenty of toppings) for five people for very reasonable prices. There's a cat-theme décor and the chef lets out an occasional meow as he spices his creations.

Le Mahogany (Map p116; ☎ 56 39 73; starters 600-1500 CFP, mains 1500-4000 CFP) Reliably good French and Chinese food (meat dishes are the speciality) is served in this restaurant dominated by (you guessed it) mahogany furniture. Call for a pick-up from your hotel. Credit cards are accepted.

Fisherman's Wharf Restaurant (Map p116; ☎ 56 50 50; mains 1100-2400 CFP) This restaurant in the Kaveka Hotel juts out over the lagoon and has tables arranged around a hole in the floor so you can look down at the fish. The French and Chinese specialities have a good reputation.

Allo Pizza (Map p116; ☎ 56 18 22; pizzas 1100-1500 CFP; 📺 lunch Wed-Sun, dinner Tue-Sun) Just about

any kind of pizza you could think of is available at this excellent place. It will even deliver in the area.

L'Ananas Bleu (Map p116; ☎ 56 13 68; 📺 breakfast & lunch) On the water in the Club Bali Hai, this place has great snacks and light lunches. It can get very windy here.

Alfredo's (Map p116; ☎ 56 17 71; mains 1500-3000 CFP) A lively little Italian restaurant that's popular with travellers. Transport is offered from as far as the Moorea Pearl Resort. Credit cards are accepted.

Restaurant Chez Jean-Pierre (Map p116; ☎ 56 18 51; mains 1500-2500 CFP; 📺 lunch Mon, lunch & dinner Tue, Thu, Fri & Sun, dinner Sat) For those tiring of raw fish, this very Chinese place also offers some tofu and other vegetarian dishes on its extensive menu. Credit cards are accepted.

Les Nouveaux Mondes (Map p116; ☎ 56 44 24; mains 2000-4000 CFP) This well-decorated restaurant looks like an enormous Polynesian *fare*. Everything is made of coconut, including the tables, chairs and flooring. The food is French, Chinese and Tahitian. Credit cards are accepted.

HAURU POINT

The strip along Hauru Point is teeming with places to eat.

Les Tipaniers Hotel & Restaurant (Map p117; ☎ 56 12 67; lunch 1000-1500 CFP, dinner 1000-2500 CFP) This restaurant, at the hotel of the same name, combines French and Italian food with a Tahitian flavour and has a great reputation. It's a movable feast, with breakfast and lunch served at the beach, while dinner is served up near the main road. Transport from the Beachcomber area can be arranged for 400 CFP. Credit cards are accepted.

A L'Heure du Sud (Map p117; sandwiches 450-600 CFP; 📺 lunch) A great variety of well-stuffed sandwiches are served at this dark blue *roulotte* (food van) in front of Le Petit Village shopping centre.

Le Mayflower (Map p117; ☎ 56 53 59; mains 2000-4000 CFP) Next to the Hotel Hibiscus, this popular French place is famous for its lobster ravioli.

Restaurant Tumoana (Map p117; ☎ 56 37 60; mains 1000-1500 CFP) The tables are plastic and the décor is nonexistent but the over-the-water location more than makes up for it. The menu offers the same French-Tahitian dishes found at swankier eateries. Credit cards are accepted.

Fare Vai Moana (Map p117; ☎ 56 17 14; mains 1500-3500 CFP) This eatery in the Fare Vai Moana hotel has a great beach-side setting; the deck offers front-row seats for the sunset and there is sometimes live music.

Coco d'Isle (Map p117; ☎ 56 59 07; mains 1500-2500 CFP) A decent little place with good grub. There's also a kids' menu for 1000 CFP. This is a pretty dusty spot, but the restaurant is pleasant nonetheless. Prices drop if you order takeaway.

PAPETOAI

La Licorne D'Oir (Map p114; ☎ 56 35 19; mains 2500-3500 CFP) A new place on the side of the road serving an interesting array of gastronomic treats from around the world. Free pick-up is available.

AIRPORT

Chez Capo (☎ Sun from 11.30am) Capo prepares excellent *maa Tahiti* (Tahitian food) complete with a Tahitian-style *bringué* (party with ukulele) at the airport every Sunday lunchtime.

MOTU TIAHURA

Motu Moea – Restaurant la Plage (Map p117; ☎ 74 96 96; mains 1100-2000 CFP) This place has an idyllic setting on Motu Tiahura (also known as Motu Moea). The food is simple, fresh and reasonably priced. Take a dip once you've digested your meal – this is the life! You can get a boat over to the *motu* from Les Tipaniers Hotel & Restaurant (500 CFP).

HAAPITI

Le Bateau (Map p114; ☎ 55 05 65; mains 1700-4000 CFP) This floating restaurant at Résidence Linareva is in a boat at the end of the quay. The food is essentially French, but with many a local twist, and there are cocktails at the bar. Transport from Hauru Point can be arranged for 500 CFP. Reservations are recommended; credit cards are accepted.

Self-Catering

It's not a bad idea to consider self-catering while on Mo'orea. As is typical of French Polynesia, restaurants can be pricey and many places to stay have little kitchens where you can whip up your own culinary storms. There are quite a few supermarkets and smaller shops around the island where you can buy wonderful, fresh baguettes,

cool drinks, canned food, cereal, milk and the like (be prepared for high prices). However, it's not as easy as you'd hope to find fresh produce on Mo'orea: there are pineapples, limes and *pamplemousses* (grapefruit) aplenty, but a dinner out of these three would take a *chef extraordinaire*.

Champion-TOA (Map p114; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, morning Sun) is the biggest supermarket and is about 500m south of the quay in Vaiaere. Supermarché Pao Pao (Map p116) in Cook's Bay and Magasin Rémy (Map p116), near Chez Luciano, just east of PK5, are other supermarkets. Just over the bridge in Paopao is another supermarket.

The best way to buy fresh fish is directly from the fishermen who sell along the road in the afternoons.

DRINKING & ENTERTAINMENT

Mo'orea is more the place to pay off that sleep debt than to kick up your heels. A boozy dinner and a dance performance is about as lively as things get. The big hotels have bars where all are welcome to whet their palates with a predinner drink.

A couple of times a week (usually Wednesday and Saturday evenings) the bigger hotels organise Polynesian music and dance performances by local groups. These performances tend to be of a very high standard, so it's worth trying to catch one. Try Sofitel la Ora, Moorea Beachcomber Intercontinental Resort, Club Bali Hai and Moorea Pearl Resort. Call the hotels for dates and times.

Moorea Beachcomber Intercontinental Resort (Map p117; ☎ 55 19 19) On the last Friday of

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Maria@Tapas (Map p116; ☎ 55 01 70; ☎ 8am-11pm Mon-Wed, 8am-1am Thu-Sat; mains 950-2000 CFP; 🍷) Order a burrito, grab a beer and enjoy the music at this funky little Tex-Mex joint. Yes, it's a little weird living it up Latin style in a Polynesian paradise but this is often the only nightlife option on Mo'orea. Half-price happy-hour beer is available Thursday and Friday from 6pm to 7pm and you can check your email while you imbibe. It's best to reserve well in advance on nights when there is music (entry fee 500 CFP).

every month the Beachcomber turns into a lively bar and discotheque that's popular with the local French and *demi* population.

Tiki Village (Map p114; ☎ 55 02 50; www.tikivillage.pf; admission with lunch 1500 CFP, with/without dinner 8000/4000 CFP; ☎ Tue-Sat) This is a Tahitian cultural village where tourists can watch local people 'living' in the traditional way. The 60-person dance performances are the biggest on the island. A ticket with dinner and the evening dance performance lets you in free for activities during the day also.

SHOPPING

There are two small shopping centres on the island. The shopping centre (Map p116) in Maharepa has a few shops, some banks and the Librarie Kina Maharepa, which has a decent selection of magazines and one or two English-language newspapers (usually the *Herald-Tribune*, always a few days old).

Le Petit Village (Map p117) has various shops and souvenir outlets, a bank, a supermarket and a bookshop/newsagency. If you forgot your swimsuit, the best place to pick up a new one is at Ron Hall's Island Fashion (Map p116) in Cook's Bay.

Retail therapy cannot always be administered on Sunday, as many boutiques and jewellery shops close.

Souvenirs & Crafts

La Poterie de L'Aquarium – Teva Yrondi (Map p116; ☎ /fax 56 30 00; ☎ 9.30am-noon & 2.30-5.30pm Wed-Sun) is an interesting place with has a fascinating range of jewellery that is pottery, pearls that are jewellery and pottery that is (thankfully) pottery.

The coastal road is littered with places selling *pareu* (some of them hand painted), T-shirts, the Balinese wood carvings that have become worldwide tropical souvenirs and other curios. All the shops sell more or less the same things.

Art

At Cook's Bay, Galerie van der Heyde (Map p116) displays the Dutch-owner's art on the inside wall of the compound.

Woody Sculptures (Map p114; ☎ 56 37 00; Pape-toai), just before the Hauru Point enclave, is where to come for interesting wood carvings and pearl jewellery.

There are also a number of places dotted around the island where artists display their

work. Keep an eye out for signs along the coastal road.

Black Pearls

Although no pearl farms are located on Mo'orea, a number of places around the island specialise in black pearls. Prices are generally the same as on Tahiti but you'll have to shop around. Often the smaller, less glamorous shops have the best deals while the bigger places have a greater variety of jewellery designs.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

There's less than 20km of blue Pacific between Tahiti and Mo'orea, and getting from one island to the other is simplicity itself. At the quay in Pape'ete you can hop on one of the high-speed ferries and be on Mo'orea in less than half an hour. Or from the airport, catch an Air Moorea flight and be there in less than 10 minutes.

Air

Air Moorea (Tahiti ☎ 86 41 41; Mo'orea ☎ 56 10 34; adult/child one way 2500/1600 CFP) Convenient flights from Tahiti's Faa'a airport to Mo'orea leave at least every half-hour; flights between 1pm and 3pm are sometimes reduced to 1600 CFP for both adults and children. At Faa'a airport, Air Moorea is in a separate small terminal, a short stroll to the east of the main terminal.

Air Tahiti (☎ 86 42 42, weekends 86 41 84) flies between Mo'orea and Bora Bora (18,000 CFP one way), Huahine (13,000 CFP one way) and Ra'iatea (13,000 CFP one way).

Boat

It's a breezy ride across the 'Sea of the Moon' between Tahiti and Mo'orea. First departures in the morning are usually around 6am; the last trips are in the afternoon at around 4.30pm or 5.30pm. All fares are 900 CFP each way.

Aremiti 5 (Pape'ete ☎ 42 88 88; Mo'orea ☎ 56 31 10) and the **Moorea Express** (Pape'ete ☎ 82 47 47; Mo'orea ☎ 56 43 43) jet to and from Mo'orea in about 30 minutes six or more times daily. The **Aremiti Ferry** (Pape'ete ☎ 42 85 85; Mo'orea ☎ 56 31 10) and the **Moorea Ferry** (Pape'ete ☎ 45 00 30; Mo'orea ☎ 56 34 34) run about four times daily and take about 50 minutes to cross.

You can buy tickets at the ticket counter on the quay just a few minutes before departure. If you are bringing a car it's best to reserve in advance.

GETTING AROUND

Getting around Mo'orea without a car or bicycle is not all that easy. Distances are not particularly great but are often just a bit too far to walk. Bear in mind that many of the restaurants and quite a few pearl shops will pick you up for free or for a nominal fee if you call them.

To/From the Airport & Quay

A shuttle bus meets 'some' of the boat arrivals and departures. If you happen upon this bus, it's only 200/100 CFP for adults/children to or from any of the Cook's Bay or Hauru Point hotels. Mo'orea's taxis are notoriously expensive: from the airport to the Beachcomber Intercontinental, at the very start of Hauru Point, will cost about 3500 CFP. However, you may be able to find a shared taxi willing to take you from the quay to Cook's Bay, for example, for around 2000 CFP.

Most hotels, even the budget places, offer airport transfers. Air Moorea offers a 500 CFP minibus service to any of the island's hotels after each flight.

Boat

You can hire a boat – an ideal way to explore the lagoon and small *motu* – at **Moorea Loka Boat** (☎ 78 13 39; 2¼/8hr incl fuel 7000/9000/11,000 CFP), at the Hibiscus and Tipaniers hotels.

Car

Mo'orea is an island where having your own wheels is very useful. Car-rental operators can be found at the Vaiare ferry quay, at the airport, at some of the major hotels and dotted around the Cook's Bay and Hauru Point tourist centres. Four-, eight- and 24-hour rates are quoted as well as cheaper

rates for two or more days. Generally, you'll pay from around 6000/8000 CFP for a half/full day including liability insurance and unlimited mileage.

Albert Transport & Activities (Map p116; ☎ 56 19 28, 56 33 75) A local operator, this place has prices that are generally lower than the international companies.

Avis (☎ 56 32 61, 56 32 68; fax 56 32 62) This agency can be found at the ferry quay at Vaiare, at the airport and at Club Bali Hai.

Europcar Beachcomber Intercontinental Resort (Map p117; ☎ 56 19 50); Le Petit Village (Map p117; ☎ 56 34 00; fax 56 35 05); opposite Club Bali Hai (Map p116; ☎ 56 46 84); Sofitel la Ora (Map p114; ☎ 56 42 30); Vaiare (☎ 56 28 64) The main office is at Le Petit Village commercial centre. You can also find it at the ferry quay at Vaiare, at Sofitel la Ora, opposite Club Bali Hai and at the Beachcomber Intercontinental Resort.

There are petrol stations located near the Vaiare ferry quay, close to the airport, beside Cook's Bay and at Le Petit Village on Hauru Point.

Scooter, Fun Car & Bicycle

Europcar (Map p117; ☎ 56 34 00; fax 56 35 05) Europcar rents scooters for 4500/5000 CFP for a half-/full day, those funny little 'fun cars' for 9000 CFP for a half-day and bikes for 800/1700 CFP for a half-/full day.

Tehotu Location (☎ 56 52 96; per 6/8/24hr 4500/5000/5500 CFP) Located right at the ferry terminal, scooters are available here.

Taxi

Taxis are horribly expensive on Mo'orea, even by French Polynesian standards. It's not much more expensive to rent a car than to take a taxi from the airport or ferry quay to a hotel at Hauru Point. If you have to take a **taxi** (☎ 56 10 18), you can find one at the airport from 6am to 6pm.