



TAHITI

ARANUI 5: SECRETS OF THE AUSTRAL ISLANDS – CRUISE & CULTURE EXPEDITION (TOUR CODE: 14962)

STARTS AND ENDS

in Australia

TRAVEL PERIODS

See additional information

EXPERIENCE

Cruising
Cultural

TRAVEL STYLE

Ocean Cruising

Set sail on a rare Polynesian journey aboard Aranui 5, a one-of-a-kind passenger-freighter that seamlessly blends comfort with cultural authenticity. Cruise to the remote Austral Islands—an untouched corner of French Polynesia steeped in ancestral traditions, dramatic landscapes, and warm island hospitality.

Highlights

- **Unique Cruise Format:** Travel aboard a working freighter with full passenger amenities including a pool, spa, and panoramic lounges
- **Explore 5 Remote Islands:** Raivavae, Rurutu, Tubuai, Rimatara, and Rapa
- **Authentic Cultural Encounters:** Visit ancient ceremonial sites, meet local artisans, and experience traditional music and dance
- **Pre/Post Stay in Papeete:** 5 nights at Kon Tiki Hotel, centrally located near markets, waterfront, and cultural attractions
- **Immersive Excursions:** Enjoy guided hikes, village visits, and scenic drives through lush valleys and rugged coastlines
- **Off-the-Grid Adventure:** Discover islands rarely visited by tourists, offering a truly exclusive experience

Entire Bonus

BONUS: Free Transfers in Tahiti

Peace of Mind, Every Step of the Way

This holiday package is carefully designed by our team to give you complete Peace of Mind, with access to trusted local partners and expert support at your destination.

Australia's Only Industry-Accredited Tahiti Specialists

Tahiti Travel is Australia's only industry-accredited Tahiti specialist, combining genuine destination expertise with the strength and stability of an established travel group - so you can book with total confidence.

Venture off the beaten path to the Austral Islands, one of French Polynesia's most remote and least explored regions, aboard the Aranui 5—a unique passenger-freighter offering comfort with authenticity. This experience combines a 12-night cruise through five captivating islands with a 5-night stay at the retro-chic Kon Tiki Hotel in Papeete.

Explore dramatic cliffs, ancient caves, and vibrant villages that preserve centuries-old Polynesian traditions. As the Aranui 5 delivers essential cargo to these isolated communities, you'll witness everyday island life—where locals welcome the ship with music, crafts, and warm smiles.

From sacred marae and archaeological sites to traditional weaving, dance, and breathtaking landscapes, this journey offers deep cultural connection and unforgettable discovery.



THE LEADING
TAHITI SPECIALISTS



50+ YEARS
EXPERIENCE



ACCREDITED
& TRUSTED



ESTABLISHED
PARTNERSHIPS



TAILORED
ITINERARIES



ON GROUND
SUPPORT

INCLUSIONS

- Return economy airfares from Sydney, Brisbane or Melbourne with Air Tahiti Nui
- 12-night cruise aboard Aranui 5 in a Standard Cabin (Obstructed View)
- 5 nights at Kon Tiki Hotel in a Tahitian Room - ★★★
- Airport meet & greet with traditional flower lei
- All transfers between airport, hotel, and cruise terminal
- All onboard meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner)
- Daily American breakfast at Kon Tiki
- Wine included during onboard lunches and dinners
- All shore excursions with English-speaking guides
- Port charges and government taxes

ITINERARY

Day 1 Airport Kon Tiki

Arrive at Tahiti International Airport, where our representative will welcome and escort you to your transfer to Kon Tiki, a short 15-minute drive from the airport.

Overnight stay in Tahiti at **Kon Tiki** in a Tahitian Room.

Day 2-3 Kon Tiki

Take time to discover the rich culture and natural beauty of Tahiti and its surroundings. Wander through scenic coastal spots, admire local architecture, and explore open-air viewpoints and historic sites that capture the island's charm. Enjoy casual walks, sample local cuisine, and soak up the vibrant atmosphere of the capital at your own pace.

Overnight stay in Tahiti at **Kon Tiki** in a Tahitian Room.

Breakfast

Day 4 Kon Tiki Papeete

Enjoy a relaxing morning at the Kon Tiki. Once you have checked out of the hotel, depart from Papeete in the morning, receive a warm welcome onboard from the crew and sail to Rurutu atoll in the Tuamotu archipelago.

The day is spent getting to know crew and fellow guests while exploring the vessel that will be 'home' for the next 13 days.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 5 Papeete Rurutu

Rurutu, one of French Polynesia's largest raised atolls, offers a striking contrast to typical South Pacific landscapes. Its dramatic basalt and limestone cliffs, ancient caves once inhabited by islanders, volcanic interior, lush jungles, pristine beaches, and scenic bays create a truly breathtaking setting. Rurutu is also renowned across Polynesia for its exceptional basketry — intricately crafted hats, bags, baskets, and rugs made from pandanus leaves and other natural materials.

The Aranui will anchor off Rurutu, with passengers disembarking by tender at Moerai dock after lunch onboard. Upon arrival, enjoy a warm island welcome with traditional songs and take time to explore the peaceful village of Moerai at your own pace.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6 Rurutu

Your second day on Rurutu begins with a traditional flower welcome, accompanied by the sounds of Polynesian songs, ukuleles, guitars, and drums. Hop aboard local trucks and set off to explore the island's dramatic basalt and limestone cliffs, ancient caves once inhabited by islanders, lush tropical jungle, white sand beaches, and stunning bays. Thanks to its rich

soil and cooler climate, Rurutu is known for cultivating coffee and taro.

A delicious, authentic Rurutu meal awaits you at the mayor's house, complete with the ceremonial opening of the *umu'ai* (earth oven). Afterwards, unwind on the white sands of Vitaria Beach and swim in the tranquil lagoon.

From August to September, Rurutu becomes a sanctuary for humpback whales, who arrive to mate and give birth. With the Aranui 5 in port during September, you'll have the special opportunity to see and hear these majestic creatures. For the adventurous, an optional excursion to Mole'e Cave — nicknamed "the mouth of the monster" — is available for experienced hikers (registration required at reception).

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day **7**

Rimatara

The Aranui disembarks at Taanini Dock, gateway to the remote volcanic island of Rimatara — the last island of the Austral archipelago to be discovered in the 19th century by Captain Samuel Pinder Henry. Rimatara has preserved its rich traditions, including its unique dialect, and is home to the rare and vibrant Kuhl's Lori, known locally as the "Ura," which can also be spotted in the Cook Islands.

Upon arrival, you'll pass through a traditional purification smoke ceremony, a centuries-old gesture of welcome, before exploring the island's charming villages — Amaru, Anapoto, and Motuaura — by minibus or truck. In Amaru, visit the seaside royal cemetery where generations of kings and queens of Rimatara are laid to rest. Legend has it, never make faces near the royal tomb, or risk staying that way forever!

A beach barbecue awaits in Motuaura, where you can relax on the sand or snorkel in crystal-clear waters. Covered in taro fields and fruit trees, Rimatara is truly a lush island garden. For bird lovers, an optional excursion offers the chance to spot the colourful red parakeet, the Ura — registration required at reception.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day **8**

Ua Pou (Hakahau)

Tubuai, the most populated island of the Australs, welcomes you with flower garlands and lively local music as you arrive by tender at the historic Bloody Bay landing stage. At the town hall, enjoy demonstrations of traditional crafts, including pandanus leaf weaving and shell necklace making, for which the island is renowned. Thanks to its fertile soil and cooler climate, Tubuai is known for cultivating fresh produce such as cabbage, lettuce, and potatoes.

Your day includes a guided tour of the island's key cultural sites by truck, including the sacred marae of Po Tui Tui, Fort George — the short-lived refuge of the Bounty mutineers in 1789 — and Bloody Bay, the site of historic battles between the islanders and mutineers.

After lunch onboard, enjoy swimming or snorkelling in the crystal-clear waters of Bloody Bay. For certified divers, an optional diving excursion is available — sign up at reception.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day **9**

At Sea

Enjoy a relaxing day on the Pool Deck, unwind in the comfort of the air-conditioned Lounge, or simply take in endless South Pacific views as we sail toward Rimatara. Onboard, enriching lectures on the history and culture of the Austral Islands offer insight into this fascinating region. Throughout the cruise, the vibrant Polynesian crew will proudly share their traditions and entertain you with the joyful rhythms of Polynesian songs, ukuleles, guitars, and drums.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 10 Rapa

As you approach remote Rapa — only accessible by sea — the Captain may say with a smile, “Welcome to Rapa. Next stop, Antarctica.” The southernmost inhabited island of French Polynesia, Rapa is a rugged, crescent-shaped landmass, famous for its fjord-like coastline carved with 12 deep bays. Often called the little sister of Easter Island, Rapa offers a temperate climate and unique scenery, where coconut palms give way to orchards of apples, peaches, and nectarines.

The Aranui will dock in Ahurei, where you'll be welcomed with flower garlands and the vibrant sounds of Rapa's local music. Trucks will take you to the cultural center, where you'll meet the island's skilled *mamas*, known for weaving delicate reed hats, baskets, and bamboo crafts. A local meal will be served on land. For those eager to explore, a guided two-and-a-half-hour hike to Fort Morango Uta reveals breathtaking island views.

Your adventure ends with a lively Polynesian evening — enjoy a plancha buffet by the pool (Deck 7) or in the restaurant (Deck 4), weather permitting.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11 Rapa

During our 1.5-day stopover in Rapa, explore Ahurei—the island's main village—and discover ancient fortresses, an agricultural center, and local arts and crafts. Meet the islanders and share a traditional *ma'a* cooked over a wood fire in the village, experiencing authentic island life in this remote paradise.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12 Raivavae

Often called the “Bora Bora of yesteryear,” Raivavae boasts one of the most beautiful lagoons in Tahiti and her islands—a true garden of Eden cherished by its inhabitants. When the Aranui anchors, passengers disembark by tender onto Mahanatoa Beach, greeted with flower wreaths and traditional Raivavae songs and rhythms.

A bus tour follows, including visits to the iconic “Smiling Tiki” and the island's scattered marae. Enjoy a delicious, authentic Raivavae buffet on Mahanatoa Beach, then take time to explore the village or snorkel in the crystal-clear lagoon. For the adventurous, an optional hike to Mount Hiro is available (registration at reception).

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day **13** At sea

Spend a relaxing day on the Pool Deck or unwind in the air-conditioned Lounge while enjoying stunning views of the South Pacific Ocean as we sail back to the Society Islands. Enrich your journey with lectures on the culture and history of the Aranui 5, highlighting its unique philosophy and contributions. Stay immersed in authentic Polynesian culture with traditional entertainment, including Polynesian song lessons, Tahitian dance initiations, and captivating evening shows under the stars.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day **14** Raiatea

Raiatea, once called Havai'i, is the cradle of Polynesian civilization and the starting point for voyages to New Zealand, Hawaii, and Easter Island. The Aranui docks here, where passengers are warmly welcomed with tiare flowers and the rhythmic sounds of the *to'ere*.

Buses await to take you to Taputapuatea, a spectacular 1,000-year-old marae and UNESCO World Heritage Site, revered as the spiritual heart of Polynesia. After a traditional lunch, spend your afternoon exploring Uturoa, browsing local shops and crafts along the waterfront.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day **15** Bora Bora

Arriving in **Bora Bora's** world-famous lagoon of opalescent blues and greens, you will be greeted by majestic Mount Otemanu, the island's highest peak. In this picture-perfect island paradise, you will enjoy a day at the beach and another delicious picnic, on a private "motu" islet surrounded by crystalline waters.

You may also choose from a variety of excursions at an additional cost: circle island tour by boat or bus, helicopter flight, 4WD off-road tour and one of the most popular for the bravest: shark and ray feeding!

Bora Bora was a US military outpost during World War II and remnants from the war such as cannons and bunkers can be seen on the 4WD tour. Evening departure for Papeete.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day **16** Papeete Kon Tiki

This is the end of our journey. It's time to say *Nānā!* (Goodbye) to your travel companions, to the Polynesian staff and

Aranui guides.

Morning arrival into Papeete by around 7:00 AM and guests disembark. Our representative will be waiting for you as you disembark to transfer you to the Kon Tiki. Spend a relaxing afternoon, wander through scenic coastal spots, admire local architecture, and explore open-air viewpoints and historic sites that capture the island's charm.

Overnight stay in Tahiti at **Kon Tiki** in a Tahitian Room.

Breakfast



Day 17 Kon Tiki

Today is your day to spend as you please. Consider exploring the charming city of Papeete, where you'll find a wealth of shops and attractions to discover. You might want to start at the famous public market, Le Marché de Papeete, where you can peruse a variety of locally made goods or marvel at the exquisite black pearls at the Tahiti Pearl Market. Whatever you choose, there's no shortage of things to see and do in this vibrant city.

Overnight stay in Tahiti at **Kon Tiki** in a Tahitian Room.

Breakfast



Day **18** Kon Tiki Airport

It's time to wrap up our journey. Please check out and take the transfer to Tahiti International Airport for your international flight back home.

Breakfast

ACCOMMODATION

Kon Tiki Tahiti

Tahiti

A peaceful haven for travelers seeking an authentic French Polynesian experience, the hotel blends modern comfort with a deep respect for the environment. Its contemporary architecture, inspired by Ma'ohi culture, creates an immersive, authentic atmosphere from the moment you arrive.

Perfectly located in the heart of Papeete, directly opposite the ferry terminal, the hotel offers a true timeless escape—where retro charm meets modern comfort, all within easy reach of the city's attractions.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

French

LOCAL CURRENCY

CFP franc

- **Advertised FROM prices apply to low-season travel periods only** and are subject to availability at the time of booking.
- **Prices vary by travel date, room type, length of stay and demand**, with higher rates applying during shoulder and peak periods, including school holidays and blackout dates.
- **FROM prices may not be available on all departures** and are indicative only.
- **International flights, where included, are based on lead-in fares** and are subject to limited availability. Actual airfares may vary depending on travel dates, seat availability and airline policies.
- **Any airfare differences from the advertised package price will be advised prior to booking**, and additional charges may apply for flight upgrades or changes.
- **Additional charges may apply**, including peak-season surcharges, festive period supplements, mandatory resort dinners, upgrades and optional experiences.
- **Final pricing, inclusions and promotions are confirmed at the time of enquiry or booking** and are subject to availability and change without notice.
- **Indicative pricing shown** for advertising purposes only.

Excluded

- **Domestic airfares and taxes**, unless expressly stated in your holiday package
- **Visa costs**, including application, processing and issuance fees
- **Local city, tourist or accommodation taxes**, where applicable, payable locally
- **Meals not specifically listed as included**, including mandatory festive or special-event dinners
- **Travel insurance and personal expenses**, including mini-bar, laundry, telephone calls and similar incidentals
- **Tips and gratuities** to guides, drivers, porters, hotel, restaurant or boat staff
- **Any other services or expenses not expressly included** in the holiday package

IN PARTNERSHIP

