

# French Polynesia

## KEY FACTS

**Official name:** Territoire de la Polynésie Française (Territory of French Polynesia)

**Head of State:** President of France François Hollande (PS) (from 15 May 2012), represented by *Préfet* Jean-Pierre Laflaquière (from 3 Sep 2012)

**Head of government:** President of the Territorial Government Gaston Flosse (from 17 May 2013)

**Ruling party:** Tahoera'a Huiraatira (from 5 May 2013)

**Area:** 3,600 square km (35 islands and 83 atolls)

**Population:** 274,512 (2012)\*

**Capital:** Papeete (on Tahiti)

**Official language:** French and Reo Maohi (Tahitian)

**Currency:** Comptoirs Français du Pacifique franc (CFPF) = 100 centimes

**Exchange rate:** CFPf90.05 per US\$ (Jul 2013); (pegged CFPf119.25 per euro)

**Inflation:** 1.80% (2011)\*

\* estimated figure

French Polynesians had a change of government in 2013 when the second round of the elections held on 5 May was convincingly won by the Tahoera'a Huiraatira party with 45.11 per cent (38 of the 57 seats in the Assembly). Former leader, Oscar Tamaru, was out of the country at the time, although that probably wasn't the reason for the defeat.

In 2004 the five groups of islands that make up French Polynesia were designated as an overseas country (pays d'outre-mer) of France, which had been planned as the official designation for France's Pacific dependencies. However the status was never created and French Polynesia fell into the category of overseas collectivity. It sends two deputies to the French National Assembly and two senators to the Senate.

## Back on decolonisation list

However, on 17 May 2013 the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) voted to place French Polynesia back on the UN list of territories that should be decolonised. And it has requested the French Government to 'facilitate rapid progress... towards a self-determination process.'

Adopting a consensus resolution tabled by Nauru, Tuvalu and Solomon Islands, the UNGA affirmed 'the inalienable right of the people of French Polynesia to self-determination and independence' under the UN Charter, and declared that 'an obligation exists... on the part of the Government of France, as the administering power of the territory, to transmit information on French Polynesia.' The UNGA's action places French Polynesia back on the UN list of non-self governing territories, bringing the number of inscriptions to 17. Meanwhile, President Gaston Flosse has denounced the UNGA decision to reinscribe French Polynesia on the UN list of territories to be decolonised, describing it as dictatorial and vowing that he won't ever let the UN flag fly on his palace.

The vote in New York, which was boycotted by France, came in the dying hours of the presidency of Oscar Tamaru, for whom it was a last minute political win

after a personal campaign of more than 30 years.

Tourism is an important money-earner with visitors mostly favouring Tahiti and Bora Bora. Although the islands are prone to typhoons, there is a year-round warm climate, volcanic peaks and tranquil lagoons, to attract the visitor.

Although there is a high standard of living, wealth is unevenly distributed and unemployment is high.

## COUNTRY PROFILE

### Historical profile

French Polynesia consists of 118 islands and was settled by Polynesians between 300 and 800 AD. From these islands, Hawaii, the Cook Islands and New Zealand were colonised.

1843 Tahiti, the largest island, and Moorea became French protectorates. 1880 Tahiti became a French colony. The other islands were annexed under the name Comptoirs Français de l'Océanie. 1957 The group of islands became the Territoire d'Outre-Mer (TOM, overseas territory) of French Polynesia, administered by a governor in Papeete on Tahiti. 1960 An international airport opened at Faa'a on Tahiti.

1963 French nuclear tests were conducted for the first time at Mururoa Atoll. 1977 Increased powers for the council of ministers were approved by the French government.

1984 New powers for the government, particularly in commerce, were approved by the French government.

1983 Despite strong local protests, French authorities insisted that nuclear tests would continue for 'as long as necessary'.

1984 Jurisdiction over certain local affairs (local budget, health services, primary education, culture, social welfare, public works, agriculture and sports) was conferred on the council of ministers. Gaston Flosse became president of the governing council.

1986 The Tahoeraa Huiraatira-Rassemblement pour la République (TH-RPR) (People's Servant-Rally for the Republic) won the Territorial Assembly elections.

1987 Following accusations of misappropriation of public funds, Flosse resigned as president.

1990 Amendments to the constitution augmented presidential and Territorial Assembly powers.

1996 Gaston Flosse was re-elected president. France ended nuclear testing. The French government relinquished control of all affairs except for defence, law enforcement, the judiciary and the local currency.

2002 An appeal court in Paris dismissed fraud accusations against President Flosse.

2004 France's President Chirac dissolved the Territorial Assembly and changed French Polynesia's status to Pays d'Outre-Mer (overseas country) (POM).

Oscar Temaru (pro-independence, Tavini Huira'atira (People's Servant) (PS) was elected president of the new Assemblée de la Polynésie Française (APF) (Assembly of French Polynesia). Temaru was ousted by Gaston Flosse (TH-RPR).

2005 Oscar Temaru (PS), leader of the pro-independence movement and supported by the ADN, was elected president.

2006 President Temaru (PS) was ousted and Gaston Tong Sang (Tahoera'a Huiraatira (TH) (Popular Rally) was elected president, by the APF.

2007 In the first round of the postponed presidential elections for the APF, the incumbent, Gaston Tong Sang received the least votes and was eliminated. In the runoff, Oscar Temaru (PS) won 27 votes and Édouard Fritch (TH) 17. A group of Tong Sang supporters broke away from the ruling TH and formed a new party, the O Porinetia To Tatou Ai'a (OPTTA). The French National Assembly approved a new parliamentary voting system of proportional representation and a minimum electoral threshold in a bid to bring a measure of stability to the islands' politics.

2008 The cabinet of President Oscar Temaru resigned. After two rounds in the general elections, the To Tatou Ai'a (Our Home) coalition (led by Temaru) won a total of 45.2 per cent of the vote (27 seats out of 57), the UPLD (led by Tong Sang) won 37.2 per cent (20) and the TH (led by Flosse) 17.2 per cent (10). Turnout was 76.9 per cent. A coalition of opposites, Our Home and TH, voted Flosse into the presidency, but he lost a vote of no confidence and was replaced by Tong Sang, with support from minor parties.

2009 President Tong Sang resigned. Oscar Temaru became president for the fourth time in 13 years. Former president, Gaston Flosse, was convicted of corruption and complicity to destroy evidence and abuse of public funds. He was stripped of all public offices and given a one-year suspended jail sentence, while further legal action was considered.

President Temaru lost a vote of no confidence in parliament (29 votes to 24) and was replaced by Gaston Tong Sang.

2010 A general strike called in protest at the cut in over 9,000 government jobs carried out by the government in an effort to limit its budget deficit, lasted for five days and resulted in grounded air flights and paralysed public services. Central government officials in Paris summoned political leaders from French Polynesia to discuss not only the instability of the government in the islands, following six years when the leadership changed nine times, but also the on-going financial crisis. Following an inconclusive end to the talks, Paris declared that without political reform economic support would be limited. The central government had sent a delegation in 2009 to audit the work of the French Polynesian government and recommended a reduced civil administration. However, this was rejected by President Tong Sang and the central government (in Paris) cut financial aid. Foreign borrowing by the French Polynesian government was found to be prohibitively expensive. The government in Paris said it would require a commitment to change, backed by a referendum on economic development and French Polynesia's status as a DOM, before it extended credit to the islands. The French minister for overseas territories, Marie Luce Penchard, on a visit to French Polynesia, proposed an electoral reform plan that would reduce the number of representatives in the APF and the proportion of seats set aside for remote island communities. In effect French Polynesia would be split into two parts for administrative purposes: the remote outer islands and the populated inner islands. Leaders of all political parties initially rejected the proposals; which were nevertheless enacted.

2011 Richard Didier took up his post of *Préfet* in January. In April, Gaston Tong Sang lost a vote of no-confidence in parliament (57:29) and his long-time opponent Oscar Temaru replaced him as president. This was the fifth time that Temaru had been voted into the presidential office. By the beginning of June electoral reform laws (introduced from Paris) were passed, whereby votes of no-confidence will be limited; in future, a ratio of three to five in favour of a parliamentary motion will be required before a call will be allowed. President Temaru announced severe cuts to public spending of up to 50 per cent. Gaston Flosse called for early elections to give voters an opportunity to decide on these policies. His critics opined that he wanted to return to parliament before a legal judgement banned him for up to five years. In July President Sarkozy said he would veto any

Polynesian plan to hold early parliamentary elections, saying that new laws of governance precluded elections at any interval except the prescribed time (due 2013). In October, former president Gaston was sentenced by a criminal court to four years in jail for abuse of public funds. In November, an appeal court in Paris annulled Gaston Flosse's ban on holding public office, although his one-year suspended sentence was confirmed. Tahitipress news agency was closed down in December following cost-cutting measures recommended by the French government to balance the large government deficit.

2012 The first round of the French presidential elections was held on 22 April, in which 10 candidates took part. Incumbent Nicolas Sarkozy (UMP) won 27.18 per cent of the vote but his chief rival François Hollande (Parti Socialiste (PS) (Socialist Party)) won 28.63 per cent. The runoff was held on 6 May, in which the socialist candidate, François Hollande won 51.63 per cent of the vote and Nicolas Sarkozy 48.37 per cent; turnout was 80.35 per cent. On 15 May François Hollande took office as president and head of state. On 3 September, Jean-Pierre Lafflaquière took office as *Préfet* (high commissioner); Richard Didier was promoted into another post. In October, France appointed Rear Admiral Anne Cullère, the first woman, to hold the posts of Joint Commander Armed Forces in French Polynesia and commander of the French Maritime Forces in the Pacific.

2013 Former president Gaston Flosse was convicted in January on corruption charges involving French Polynesia's OPT telecommunications company; he was given a five-year prison sentence and fined US\$110,000. He immediately appealed the conviction. A new political group, the A Tia Porinetia, was formed in February, incorporating the To Tatou Aia and leaders of several small parties. Legislative elections were held on 21 April and 5 May. The result of the second round was a solid win for the Tahoera'a Huiraatira party with 45.11 per cent (38 of the 57 seats in the Assembly). The Union for Democracy won 29.26 per cent (11 seats) and the new party, the A Tia Porinetia, 25.63 per cent (8 seats). Turnout was 72.79 per cent. On 17 May the assembly elected Gaston Flosse as territorial president by a margin of 38 votes to 19. This was the fifth time he has become president and may be a short spell since he awaits the results of an appeal against his conviction for corruption. Also on 17 June the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution sponsored by Nauru, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu with support from Vanuatu, Samoa and Timor-Leste to

reinscribe French Polynesia on the UN list of non-self-governing territories. In June the government warned that the financial situation was so bad that payments were being delayed from the usual 35 days to more than 50. Government debt had grown to just under US\$1 billion. In July the government called for France to change its constitution to allow MPs to conduct debates in the Tahitian language. The request came after the French government had rejected two proposed laws because the debate took place in Tahitian, rather than French. On a visit to France in July Gaston Flosse said he would be raising the assembly's wish to hold an independence referendum as soon as possible.

### Political structure

#### Constitution

In 1996, the French government relinquished control over all the territory's affairs except for defence, foreign affairs, law enforcement, the justice system and the local currency. France is represented by a high commissioner who has a supervisory role. The territory is represented in the French Parliament by two deputies and two senators.

The local government has control over the territory's more than three million square kilometres of sea, as well as shipping, civil aviation, work permits, mineral exploration, foreign investment and local economic affairs. Under the Statute of Autonomy, it has full control over its Exclusive Economic Zone.

French Polynesia became a Pays d'Outre-Mer (POM) (overseas country) of France in 2004 with the implementation of the Assemblée de la Polynésie française (Assembly of French Polynesia) statute. It has 57 members in the assembly representing six constituencies.

Under the autonomy law, the electoral list gaining the most votes in general elections wins a bonus of extra seats, amounting to a third of the seats in the local parliament.

#### Form of state

Autonomous Pays d'Outre-Mer (POM) (overseas country) of France

#### National legislature

The unicameral Assemblée de la Polynésie Française (Assembly of French Polynesia) has 57 members elected for a five-year term, either directly or by proportional representation, in six multi-seat constituencies. The assembly elects the president of the territorial government. In 2007, the French National Assembly approved an amendment to the parliamentary voting system in an attempt to streamline the chaotic nature of politics in French Polynesia. The new proportional representation system has two rounds of

voting; to reach the second round any candidate must have at least 12.5 per cent of the vote from the first round and their party must achieve a minimum electoral threshold 5 per cent.

#### Last elections

21 April and 5 May 2013 (first and second rounds of national assembly)

**Results:** In the first round the Tahoera'a Huiraatira (Popular Rally) won 40.16 per cent, the Union for Democracy alliance (of Aia Api, Here Ai'a, Tavini Huiraatira, Tapura Amui No Raromatai and Tapura Amui No Te Faatereraa Manahune-Tuhaa Pae) 24.09 per cent and the A Tia Porinetia 19.92 per cent. Six other parties won less than the 12.5 per cent threshold to proceed to the second round. Second round results were: Tahoera'a Huiraatira 45.11 per cent (38 seats), the Union for Democracy 29.26 per cent (11 seats) and the A Tia Porinetia 19.92 per cent (8 seats). Turn out was 72.79 per cent.

#### Next elections

2018 (national assembly)

#### Political parties

##### Ruling party

Tahoera'a Huiraatira (from 5 May 2013)

##### Main opposition party

Union for Democracy

##### Political situation

In August 2010, central government officials in Paris summoned political leaders from French Polynesia to discuss not only the instability of the government in the islands, following six years when the leadership changed nine times, but also the ongoing financial crisis. Following an inconclusive end to the talks, Paris declared that without political reform economic support would be limited. The central government had sent a delegation in 2009 to audit the work of the French Polynesian government and recommended a reduced civil administration. However, this was rejected by President Tong Sang and the central government (in Paris) cut financial aid. Foreign borrowing by the French Polynesian government was found to be prohibitively expensive. The government in Paris has said it will require a commitment to change, backed by a referendum on economic development and French Polynesia's status as a DOM, before it will extend credit to the islands. In October the French minister for the overseas territories, Marie Luce Penchard, on a visit to French Polynesia, proposed an electoral reform plan that would reduce the number of representatives in the assembly and the proportion of seats set aside for remote island communities. In effect French Polynesia would be split into two parts for administrative purposes: the remote outer islands and the populated

inner islands. Leaders of all political parties initially rejected the proposals.

#### Population

274,512 (2012)\*

Approximately 34 per cent of the population is under 15 years.

The growing population is gradually converging on Tahiti and the capital, Papeete, as conditions elsewhere become more difficult.

**Last census:** 20 August 2007: 259,596

**Population density:** 63 inhabitants per sq km. Urban population: 53 per cent (1995–2001).

**Annual growth rate:** 2.5 per cent (2003)

#### Ethnic make-up

Polynesian (78 per cent), Chinese (12 per cent), local French (6 per cent), metropolitan French (4 per cent).

#### Religions

Protestant (54 per cent), Roman Catholic (30 per cent), other (16 per cent).

#### Education

**Enrolment rate:** 116 per cent gross primary enrolment, of relevant age groups, (including repeaters) (World Bank).

#### Health

**Life expectancy:** 73 years (men) 77 years (women), 2007

**Fertility rate/Maternal mortality rate:** 2.04 births per woman

**Birth rate/Death rate:** 16.93 births per 1,000 population; 4.63 deaths per 1,000 population.

**Child (under 5 years) mortality rate (per 1,000):** 8.44 deaths per 1,000 live births

#### Main cities

Papeete (capital, on Tahiti, estimated population 25,852 in 2012), Faa'a (on Tahiti, 31,326), Punaauia (27,506), Mahina (15,537), Parae (14,467), Paea (12,134), Papara (11,889).

#### Languages spoken

English is spoken, especially in tourist and business circles.

In 2010, the French ministry for the overseas territories continued to reject the promotion of Tahitian as an official language of French Polynesia. Currently only French may be used in conducting government business; any decisions made in another language can and have been challenged. An appeal to the European Court of Human Rights in 2006 failed to get Tahitian recognised as an official language..

#### Official language/s

French and Reo Maohi (Tahitian)

#### Media

##### Press

**Dailies:** There are two newspapers available, in French, *La Dépêche de Tahiti* (

Tahiti's largest newspaper) and *Les Nouvelles de Tahiti*.

**Weeklies:** In French *La Tribune Polynésienne* has general interest news. In English the *Tahiti Sun Press*, is a free-issue publication for tourists.

**Periodicals:** In French, monthly magazines include *L'Hebdo Maohi* ([www.hebdo.pf](http://www.hebdo.pf)) and the *Tahiti-Pacifique* ([www.tahiti-pacifique.com](http://www.tahiti-pacifique.com)) both covering current affairs.

**Broadcasting**

**Radio:** In addition to the government-operated RFO Polynésie

([www.rfo.fr/polynesie.php](http://www.rfo.fr/polynesie.php)) service, there are a number of private radio stations operating mostly on larger, inhabited islands, including Radio Bleue, Radio Tefana Te Reo, Radio Maohi and Radio Te Vevo, which all broadcast in Tahitian.

**Television:** The French overseas broadcaster RFO (<http://polynesie.rfo.fr>) provides all local produced news and imported French programmes, as well as internet TV services.

**Advertising**

Advertising is available in local newspapers and all such ads, correspondence and trade literature should be in French. L'Agence Tahitienne de Presse (Tahitipress) was closed down in December 2011 following cost-cutting measures recommended by the French government to balance the large government deficit.

**Economy**

Around one million black pearls, valued at US\$150 million are exported annually – French Polynesia is the Pacific region's second-largest source of loose pearls (after the Australian production of yellow pearls). Co-operatives and private producers farm quality cultured black pearls under strict guidelines introduced to maintain a healthy crop of oysters. The fisheries sector is growing with deep-sea resources (particularly tuna) fished, mainly by Asian fleets under licence. French Polynesia has the Pacific region's largest exclusive economic zone. Agriculture consists of smallholders growing fruit and vegetables, while plantations provide copra and coconut oil for export. However, the single largest component of the economy is the tourist sector. The global economic crisis in 2008–09 cut the number of tourists visiting French Polynesia by 6.2 per cent in 2009; the biggest drop was in visitors from North America and Europe. Another major source of revenue is financial transfers from France, which represent around 30 per cent of GDP; expatriate remittances, which amounted to US\$690 million in 2009 and were estimated to have risen to US\$771 million in 2010, are also an important source of revenue.

There is a long-term and serious problem of unemployment, especially since France ceased its nuclear testing and withdrew most military personnel in 1996. France agreed to contribute funds as compensation for a limited period, although it has since agreed that these payments be for an indefinite period.

Development of the remote archipelagos (Marquesas, Australs, Tuamotu and Gambiers) has begun with the construction of more airstrips and roads to improve port facilities and public services. Capital development throughout the territory has helped create new businesses, while strengthening social services.

**External trade**

Exports in 2010 were 6.4 per cent higher than in 2009, with pearls accounting for €10.1 million (US\$14.2 million) and fishing licences €601,700 (US\$841,941). Imports in 2010 totalled €141.3 million (US\$198 million).

**Imports**

Main imports are foodstuffs, consumer goods, capital goods, vehicles, fuels, machinery and equipment.

**Main sources:** France (26.4 per cent of total in 2011), Singapore (15.4 per cent), US (10.3 per cent).

**Exports**

Typically, the main exports are black pearls (90 per cent of total exports), noni fruit and juice, coconut and its derivatives (flesh, oil and copra), beer, vanilla, fish and shark meat.

**Main destinations:** Hong Kong (26.6 per cent of total in 2011), Japan (20.8 per cent), France (20 per cent).

**Agriculture**

Accounts for 4 per cent of GDP and employs 13 per cent of the workforce. Its development is a central plank of government policy. Primary products are copra, vanilla, mother-of-pearl shells, taro and cultured pearls.

Weather permitting, local production supplies over 60 per cent of overall demand for some vegetables.

Local production supplies about 28 per cent of demand for dairy products and 83–87 per cent of demand for pork. Fruit is produced for export, for fruit juice factories, and for the local market.

Green mussel, prawn, live bait and freshwater shrimp aquaculture are under development. The fishing industry, in particular tuna, is growing. Typically, the annual catch is over 500,000mt including both fish and other seafood. The government aims to increase its commercial tuna-fishing fleet to around 150 vessels, which are to be built locally and overseas. Ship-building businesses in China and Fiji will probably be the main constructors.

Pearl farming is the second most important economic activity, after tourism, with over 800,000 harvested annually. Black pearls are the main merchandise export. They are mainly shipped to Japan and US.

Although 70 per cent of the islands' land area is covered in forest, conditions limit exploitation to random felling, and almost all timber is imported. Plantations will yield productive forest of 11,250 hectares (ha) of Caribbean pine by 2025; 30ha of wood for local cabinet-making is planted per year.

**Industry and manufacturing**

The small manufacturing sector primarily processes agricultural products. It accounts for approximately 18 per cent of GDP and employs 19 per cent of the workforce.

The oil mill, Huilerie de Tahiti, purchases all copra produced and processes it into coconut oil and meal (for animal feed), soap-making and monoi (scented coconut oil). Other industries include breweries, soft drinks and fruit juice factories and power station. Several small concerns produce textiles and handicrafts.

**Tourism**

While French Polynesia is not the best known name for a Pacific holiday, Tahiti, the largest of the French Polynesian archipelago, certainly is. Tourism is the most important economic activity, accounting for a quarter of GDP, and is the primary earner of foreign income. The islands have all of the natural sights of a tropical island with a surviving cultural tradition. The Paul Gauguin Museum, in the capital Papeete, is dedicated to the works and life of the French artist who painted images of Polynesians in the late nineteenth century. There are several airlines with scheduled flights to Tahiti; an increase in cruise ship passengers has contributed to the improvement and the authorities are actively encouraging cruise visits.

**Mining**

Reserves of phosphate are present but not exploited.

**Hydrocarbons**

No oil, natural gas or coal is produced. Imported petroleum products amount to 6,300 barrels of oil per day.

**Energy**

The government-owned monopoly, Électricité de Tahiti, is responsible for power production, supply and sales in French Polynesia. On Tahiti, the largest island, peak demand was 97MW in 2007, producing 552 gigawatt hours (gWh), of which hydropower accounted for 30 per cent. Around 90 per cent of the population has access to mains electricity. On

remote islands electricity is supplied by small hydro, solar and wind generated installations.

### Banking and insurance

Although banking facilities in the principal urban centres are good, and include ATMs, financial service providers are scarce on some of the outlying islands.

### Central bank

The Paris-based Institut d'Emission d'Outre-Mer (IEOM) provides all central banking services except foreign exchange reserves.

### Time

GMT minus 10 hours

### Geography

French Polynesia comprises several scattered groups of islands (120 islands in total) in the south Pacific Ocean, lying about halfway between South America and Australia. The Cook Islands are to the west and the Line Islands (part of Kiribati) to the north-west. The island groups in French Polynesia include the Iles du Vent (including the islands of Tahiti and Moorea) and the Iles Sous le Vent (about 160km north-west of Tahiti), which together constitute the Society Archipelago (the most populous); the Tuamotu Archipelago which comprises 78 islands scattered east of the Society Archipelago in a line stretching north-west to south-east for about 1,500km; the Gambier Islands located 1,600km south-east of Tahiti; the Austral Islands lying 640km south of Tahiti; and the Marquesas Archipelago, 1,450km north-east of Tahiti.

Most islands are mountainous (volcanic) and ringed with coral reefs; the Tuamotu and Gambier groups are mainly low-lying atolls.

### Hemisphere

Southern

### Climate

French Polynesia is located in the tropical zone of the southern hemisphere. It has two seasons: warm and moist (Dec–Feb) average temperature 27 degrees Celsius (C); cool and dry (Mar–Nov), average temperature 21 degrees C. Rainfall varies, depending on relief of island and exposure to prevailing winds, but heaviest Nov–Mar.

### Entry requirements

#### Passports

Required by all, valid for six months after date of departure.

#### Visa

Required by all, except nationals of EU, other European countries and Australia for stays up to three months and nationals of the US, Canada, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea and most Latin American countries for stays up to one month.

### Customs

Visitors are allowed to bring 200 cigarettes, 100 cigarillos, 50 cigars or 200 grams of tobacco; one or two litres of spirits depending on strength; 50g perfume and 250ml eau de toilette; and goods to the value of CFF5,000 duty free.

All baggage coming in from Fiji and Samoa, except hand luggage, is fumigated. Travellers should carry clothing and toilet articles for an overnight stay in their hand luggage and arrange for their hotel to collect other baggage from the airport after fumigation.

### Prohibited imports

Import of foodstuffs, weapons and illegal drugs.

### Health (for visitors)

#### Mandatory precautions

Vaccination certificate for yellow fever if travelling from an infected area.

#### Advisable precautions

Vaccination for diphtheria, tuberculosis, hepatitis A and B, polio, tetanus, typhoid are recommended. There is a rabies risk.

### Hotels

Most of the major international hotel chains are represented. Hotels are expensive and tend to be clustered in resorts. Cheaper, but off the beaten track, are *pensions* (bed-and-breakfast type accommodation).

### Credit cards

American Express, Diners' Club, Master Card and Visa accepted throughout Tahiti.

### Public holidays (national)

#### Fixed dates

1 Jan (New Year's Day), 5 Mar (Missionary Day), 1 May (Labour Day), 8 May (Victory Day), 14 Jul (Bastille Day), 15 Aug (Assumption Day), 8 Sep (Autonomy Day), 1 Nov (All Saints' Day), 11 Nov (Armistice Day), 25 Dec (Christmas Day).

#### Variable dates

Good Friday, Easter Monday, Ascension Day, Whit Monday.

### Working hours

#### Banking

Mon–Fri: 0800–1530.

#### Business

Mon–Fri: 0800–1200, 1330–1730; Sat: 0800–1200.

#### Government

Mon–Fri: 0800–1200, 1330–1730; Sat: 0800–1200.

#### Shops

Mon–Fri: 0730–1130, 1400–1700; Sat: 0730–1130.

### Telecommunications

#### Telephone/fax

Tahiti has an automatic telephone network.

### Electricity supply

220V AC, 60 cycles (check with hotel before using appliances).

### Weights and measures

Metric system

### Social customs/useful tips

Tipping is not customary, and is contrary to traditional Tahitian hospitality.

### Getting there

#### Air

**National airline:** Air Tahiti Nui

**International airport/s:** Tahiti-Faa'a International Airport (PPT), 6km from Papeete; restaurant, bank and car hire.

**Airport tax:** None.

#### Surface

**Main port/s:** Papeete.

### Getting about

#### National transport

**Air:** There are over 25 airfields in addition to Tahiti-Faa'a International Airport. Air Tahiti operates scheduled flights to Moorea, Huahine, Raiatea, Bora-Bora, Maupiti, Rangiroa, Manihi, Takapoto, Tubuai, Nuku-Hiva (Marquesas), Ua Huka, Hiva Oa, Ua Pou, Anaa, Makemo, Hao, Rurutu and Mangareva (Gambiers) and several other atolls. Air Moorea operates daily services between Tahiti and Moorea. Both airlines also offer air taxi services, charters, circle island flights and transportation to other islands. Other air operators include Tahiti Conquest Airlines and Pacific Helicopter Tours.

**Road:** There are approximately 200km of road on Tahiti, including a circular 120km asphalt road around the main part of the island, and 100km of road on Moorea.

**Buses:** *Le truck* runs an unscheduled transport service between Papeete and outlying districts, leaving approximately every half hour for nearby areas and daily for distant points. The system also operates on Moorea, Bora Bora and some other islands.

**Water:** There is a scheduled boat service between Papeete and Moorea.

#### City transport

**Taxis:** Fares are controlled and should be displayed in each cab. In Tahiti, fares double between 2300 and 0500. Information on fares is available at GIE Tahiti Tourisme at the airport and in Papeete. The journey time from the airport to the city centre is 10 minutes.

**Buses, trams & metro:** Airport to city centre bus service operates 0400–2359 hours, every 15 minutes.

#### Car hire

There are numerous car hire establishments; rates include insurance. Drivers must hold a licence valid for at least one year and must be at least 21-years-old.

Driving is on the right-hand side of the road.

### BUSINESS DIRECTORY

The addresses listed below are a selection only. While World of Information makes every endeavour to check these addresses, we cannot guarantee that changes have not been made, especially to telephone numbers and area codes. We would welcome any corrections.

#### Telephone area codes

The international dialling code (IDD) for French Polynesia is + 689 followed by subscriber's number.

#### Useful telephone numbers

Police: 17

Fire: 18

#### Chambers of Commerce

French Polynesia Chamber of Commerce and Industry, PO Box 118, Rue Docteur Cassiau, 98713 Papeete (tel: 540-700; fax: 540-701).

#### Banking

Banque de Polynésie SA, PO Box 530, 355 Boulevard Pomare, Papeete (tel: 466-666; fax: 466-664).

Banque de Tahiti SA, PO Box 1602, Rue Cardella, Papeete (tel: 417-000; fax: 423-376).

Banque Socredo, PO Box 130, 115 rue Dumont d'Urville, Papeete (tel: 415-123; fax 433-661).

#### Central bank

Institut d'Emission d'Outre-Mer (IEOM), 5 rue Roland Barthes, 75012 Paris, France (tel : +33 1 5344-4141; fax : +33 1 4347-5134; e-mail: contact@ieom.fr).

#### Travel information

Air Moorea, BP 6019, Faa'a International Airport (tel: 864-141; fax: 864-299).

Air Tahiti Nui, Immeuble Dexter, Pont de l'Est, BP 1673, Papeete (tel: 460-303; fax: 460-222).

#### National tourist organisation offices

Tahiti Tourisme, Immeuble Paofai, Bvd Pomaré, BP 65 Papeete (tel: 505-700;

fax: 436-619; e-mail: tahiti-tourisme@mail.pf; internet site: <http://www.tahiti-tourisme.com>).

#### Other useful addresses

Institut Territorial de la Statistique, BP 395, Papeete, Tahiti (tel: 437-196; fax: 427-252).

Service des Affaires Economiques, BP 82, Papeete, Tahiti.

Syndicat des Importateurs et des Négociants, PO Box 1607, Papeete, Tahiti.

Syndicat d'Initiative de la Polynésie Française, BP 326, Papeete.

#### Internet sites

Tourism Council of the South Pacific: <http://www.infocentre.com/spt>.

Enterprise and development agency (in French): <http://www.creation-entreprises.pf/>