

# Fakarava and the UNESCO Biosphere, French Polynesia

## Trip Information

**Embarkation:** Rotoava Dock, Fakarava @ 15.00 pm

**Disembarkation:** Rotoava Dock, Fakarava @ 9.00 am

**Arrival airport:** Fakarava Airport (FAV)

**Departure airport:** Fakarava Airport (FAV)

## Flights, Hotels, Transfers, Excursions and Insurance

Travelling within French Polynesia can be made exceptionally easy when you book with Master Liveboards. We offer a range of domestic flights, hotels, transfers and short excursions that can be arranged before or after your trip. Prices for these add-ons vary dependent on the time of booking, please ask our reservations team or your agent for further prices and details.

## Advice on International Flights

We suggest you book your international flight to fly into and out of Papeete Fa'a'a International Airport (PPT) in Tahiti and that you arrive in French Polynesia 1 day before cruise departure so you are well rested before the start of the cruise. There are flights 6-7 times per week between Tahiti and Fakarava (depending on the season), which are only around 1 hour in duration. Disembarkation at the end of the cruise will be just before 10am. If you are not remaining in French Polynesia for additional nights after your cruise, please allow plenty of time for the transfer to the airport and for check-in.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE IS A MINIMUM 2 NIGHT STAY POLICY WITH ALL RESORTS AND GUEST HOUSES IN FAKARAVA, SINGLE NIGHT STAYS ARE NOT POSSIBLE.

## Transfers and excursions

Transfers to French Polynesia Master from the airport and v.v. are free of charge. Please organise your own transport if you are coming from a local hotel or pension to the meeting point at Rotoava Dock at 15:00hrs on embarkation day. Disembarkation is at 9 am. If your flight is in the afternoon, we can take you to a snackbar to wait for your

flight. Alternatively, our local partner Fakarava Yacht Services can arrange one of the following tours for you:

- Visit the pearl farm Hinano Pearl - free visit, transfer costs 2 000 XPF / per person return trip
- Guided tour of Fakarava (Fakarava Tour): 4 000 XPF / person - maximum 6 people
- The Pearl Lottery (Havaiki Lodge): introduction to the pearl, you can choose your oyster, opening of the oyster, cleaning the pearl (if there is one), necklace with the chosen pearl: 3 500 XPF / person - only on Wednesdays
- Bicycle rental: 500 XPF / 1h or: 1000 XFP / 4h; E-bikes: 1000 XPF / 1h or: 3000 XPF / 4h

These services need to be pre-booked and are on a first come - first served basis.

If your cruise embarks or disembarks at Papeete, Tahiti: both embarkation and disembarkation time will be at 12.00pm noon.

## Insurance

Master Liveboards strongly recommend that all guests carry full travel and cancellation insurance as we cannot be held liable for delays which occur during the cruise, nor any delays or cancellations of the flights, accommodation, tours and transfers we organise on your behalf. Master Liveboards works in partnership with DiveAssure and can offer you a selection of competitively priced dive and travel insurance policies, including short term and multiple trip policies. We recommend the comprehensive insurance plan Dive & Travel Plus; which has been specifically developed for diving liveaboard holidays. This insurance covers your trip expenses in the event of missing your liveaboard departure due to (flight) delays. Moreover, it provides coverage for lost diving days if for any reason the boat is required to abort the cruise; for instance, due to a guest injury, mechanical breakdown of the ship, air supply failure, inclement weather conditions, etc.

Please consult our webpage: [www.masterliveboards.com/insurance](http://www.masterliveboards.com/insurance) or contact our reservations team at [info@masterliveboards.com](mailto:info@masterliveboards.com).

## General Information

### Visa and Passports

French Polynesia is a group of islands located in the South Pacific Ocean that is an overseas country attached to France. Passport holders of the European Union, Andorra, Iceland, Lichtenstein, Monaco and Norway only need a valid passport for entry. Passport holders of most Western and Asian countries are exempt from visa requirements for stays of up to 90 days, however, we always advise our guests to check for updates and changes at your local French embassy. Please make sure that your passport has validity of at least 3-6 months depending on nationality beyond the period you intend to stay in French Polynesia. If you are travelling with medication please ensure to bring your physician's prescription with you.

Vaccination for yellow fever is required for all travelers arriving from high risk countries of Africa or South America and for those travelers who have spent more than 12 hours in any airport of these high-risk countries. A vaccination certificate may be requested at boarding. For more information about the list of countries with risk, please visit:

[wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2018/infectious-diseases-related-to-travel/yellow-fever](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2018/infectious-diseases-related-to-travel/yellow-fever).

### Time Zone

The local time is 10 hours behind UTC (GMT).

### Money Matters

The local currency in French Polynesia is the French Pacific Franc (CFP or XPF). You can exchange EUR or USD against a commission at the exchange office located outside the arrival hall of Papeete international airport or at exchange offices on the main islands (Tahiti, Bora Bora and Moorea). Banks do not exchange money. Large international chain hotels, however, will provide this service against a commission and most of the main islands will have several working ATM machines in case you want to withdraw cash.

Most of the remote atolls (Tuamotu, the Austral and Gambier group, etc.) have no banking facilities, no exchange services and have very few ATMs. They also rarely accept credit/debit card payments and cash payments in other currency than CFP. Therefore, we recommend bringing cash USD or Euro and changing at Papeete airport in Tahiti to cash CFP or alternatively withdraw the cash you may need for your stay in the remote islands when possible. In Tuamotu, exchange facilities are rare and hotels, pensions, restaurants and shops will accept cash CFP only.

### Airport Terminal Fee

Passengers travelling within and outside French Polynesia are not required to pay additional airport terminal fees or departure tax.

## Health

In French Polynesia, medical care is generally very satisfactory and medical infrastructure is comparable to what you would find in most developed countries. The most modern facilities are located in Tahiti and mostly concentrated in Papeete. Please make sure you use insect repellent and cover exposed skin to prevent any insect borne diseases.

## Language and Religion

The official languages are French and Tahitian with French being the most widely spoken language by far. The population is 45% protestant, 34% catholic and the final 21% consists of the Mormon Church, Seventh-Day Adventist Church and the Sanitos.

## Climate and Weather

Climate in French Polynesia is tropical, but moderate and very humid. The average ambient temperature is 27°C (80°F). Summer is from November through April, with a warmer and more humid climate and winter is from May through October, when the climate is slightly cooler and drier.

## Water Temperature and Exposure Suits

Water temperature ranges from 26°C (79°F) in the winter and 29°C (84°F) in the summer. Most guests find that a 3mm shorty and possibly a rash vest are suitable for the water temperature. However, for guests who feel the cold easily, especially with repeated diving, then we recommend to bring an extra vest / hood or full wetsuit. In short, bring what you feel most comfortable in.

## Life on Board

### Food and Drink

All Master Liveboards vessels provide guests with a choice of International and local cuisine, served buffet style in the indoor air-conditioned dining area. We cater to special dietary requirements; please inform our reservations team prior to your trip to ensure we have plenty of dishes to suit your needs. A range of carbonated soft drinks, fruit juices, black, green and herbal teas are commonly available as well as instant and fresh brewed coffee. A selection of fresh fruit is readily available, as well as some “naughty” treats should you feel hunger in between meal times. Guests may also select beer, wine, or spirits from our cocktail bar for an additional fee.

### Clothing and Footwear

Dress on board our vessels is very casual and most guests feel comfortable in little more than swim wear, shorts and t-shirts. A sweater is advised for cooler nights, particularly after multiple dives. All Master Liveboards vessels are equipped with laundry facilities and our housekeeper is more than happy to launder your clothes during the trip. A nominal fee of 1 USD is charged per item irrespective of size/weight. We do request that guests respect the wishes of others by donning clothing for meal times. Most guests prefer bare feet on board the vessels; however island visits may require sturdy sandals or cross-trainers.

### Electricity

On board our vessel we have 220V/50Hz European style sockets. If needed 110V/50Hz can be made available.

### Smoking

Smoking on board is permitted in designated outdoor areas.

## Safety on Board

### Emergency Management & Equipment

All Master Liveboards crew members undergo rigorous training in emergency management procedures. A thorough boat safety briefing will be provided by your cruise director at the start of your trip during which all guests will be requested to participate in a life jacket drill. Further practice scenarios may be performed during your cruise to assist our crew in keeping their skills sharp. Each vessel is equipped with modern safety features such as automated life rafts, EPIRB, satellite communication and emergency pumps.

### First Aid

Master Liveboards vessels are equipped with a fully stocked medical first aid kit for treating minor injuries and ailments as well as for assisting trained medical professionals in remote locations. Each yacht has a full complement of medical grade oxygen which can be administered to divers through DAN kits or unit specific attachments. You will also find on board an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) which has been proven to greatly increase the survival rate in the eventuality of cardiac fibrillation.

Our dive teams are all qualified emergency responders. Should you feel unwell at any point during your cruise, please seek the advice of your cruise director who will be able to assist you.

### Staying connected

High speed Wi-Fi satellite internet access is available for all guests on board. We recommend pre-booking online via [www.masterliveboards.com/french-polynesia-internet/](http://www.masterliveboards.com/french-polynesia-internet/) for obtaining attractive discounts. We have various packages available.

Our contact numbers can be found below, should your family need to contact you during the cruise, however these numbers are reserved for emergencies only.

## Payments on Board

### Marine and Port Fees

The marine park and port fees are dependent on trip duration and the applicable amount will be added to your final cruise invoice in advance of your cruise. Alternatively, it can be paid on board French Polynesia Master.

For Fakarava, the fees are 70 USD per person for 7 nights and 90 USD for 10 nights..

### Optional Extras

Master Liveboards offer a range of services to make your stay on board even more enjoyable. We offer land excursions throughout your cruise free of charge and the following services are also available for an additional fee:

- Nitrox
- Beer
- Wine (750ml bottle)
- Selection of spirits and cocktails
- Dive equipment rental
- Master Liveboards Merchandise (t-shirts, polo shirts, logbooks, etc.)

All prices are given onboard in USD; however, we accept payment in Euro, CFP, GBP, and AUD. We are also able to accept payment by credit card (Master Card and Visa) for which there is a 3% surcharge. Guests are advised to bring from 250 - 400USD (or equivalent currency) for any optional extras.

### Tipping

At Master Liveboards we believe that tipping is a matter of personal choice. Should you feel that your crew has made your holiday extra special then a tip is always appreciated. Please note we can accept tips in cash only. An envelope will be provided for your convenience by your cruise director and gratuities are divided equally amongst all the crew, including the captain and dive guides.

## Diving Information

### Guests' Level of Diving

Diving in French Polynesia can be challenging, even for the experienced diver. At many sites currents can be strong and while visibility is typically 20m+ it may diminish due to an influx of nutrients. As such, we highly recommend our guests be qualified to a minimum of Advanced Open Water level or equivalent, with a minimum of 50 logged dives, preferably with some experience in diving in current, as well as Nitrox certified. Local regulations prevent us from offering unguided diving from the boat.

Diving regulations within French Polynesia differ slightly from many areas of the world. PADI Open Water divers are by law limited to 18m (60ft), CMAS\* to 20m (66ft), whereas Advanced Open Water divers (or equivalent) and above are limited to a maximum of 30m (98ft). This is irrespective of whether you carry a Deep Diver certification.

There are regular checks by the authorities that these limits are being maintained so our guides will be very strict with them. The government diving rules are of prime importance and flouting them may result in heavy consequences; depth limits given by the cruise director must be followed. In connection with this, you will be asked to sign the divers' agreement sheet upon boarding which can be seen [here](#).

**\*\*\*Please ensure that you bring all your certification cards, including any certifications that you currently hold for diving on Nitrox.**

If you have any concerns regarding the conditions of the destination you wish to visit then please contact your agent or the Master Liveboards reservations team.

### Scuba Equipment

Since some of the domestic airline carriers in the regions we operate have strict check-in luggage limits, all Master Liveboards' vessels provide rental equipment for an additional fee including:

- Aqua Lung Wave BCD - not weight-integrated
- Aqua Lung Calypso Regulator - complete with alternate air source and depth/pressure gauge console
- Wetsuits - 3mm shorty
- Mask
- Fins - full foot or open heel and boots depending on destination
- Underwater torch
- Dive computer\*
- 15 litre aluminium tank (by special request and depending on availability)

\* Please note that the use of a dive computer and safety sausage (SMB) is compulsory on our vessels. For safety reasons, Master Liveboards asks all guests to always dive within the limits of their dive computer and make a safety stop at the end of each dive.

12 litre tanks, SMBs, weight belts and weights are provided free of charge.

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## Underwater Photography and Videography

Our vessels offer specialised features for underwater photographers and videographers. These include.

- Work stations for the preparation and maintenance of cameras
- Individual storage drawers for cameras and peripheral items
- Large rinsing tanks with fresh water changed frequently
- Our crews are thoroughly trained in the handling of delicate camera equipment and will bring your cameras to/from the tenders for you.

## Diving Health

### Flying after Diving

Current studies show that you should wait at least 24 hours after multiple repetitive dives before you fly. Please bear this in mind before you book your onward international or domestic flights.

### Diving Insurance

Diving insurance is mandatory aboard all Master Liveboards vessels, irrespective of destination. Your insurance must cover all of your scuba diving and snorkeling activities, including the costs for recompression chamber treatment and emergency air evacuation.

Whilst many general travel insurance companies will cover scuba diving activities they often fall short on recompression treatment or evacuation.

Master Liveboards strongly recommends purchasing diving-specific insurance and is working with DiveAssure to offer policies that cover everything our guests need. You can find more details at the following link on our website: [www.masterliveboards.com/insurance.html](http://www.masterliveboards.com/insurance.html)

Master Liveboards can offer short-term diving insurance coverage (1-4 weeks) though we advise that requests must be made to our reservations team at least 1 week prior to your cruise departure date to ensure adequate time for arrangements.

### Diving Emergencies

In the unlikely event a dive accident occurs there is a multiple bed hyperbaric chamber in Tahiti. A specially trained emergency team is constantly standing by. Should an emergency arise on one of the islands, rapid response medical evacuation is provided by a special aircraft. We strongly urge that all guests dive well within recognised limits, follow dive guides' advice and of course purchase specific dive insurance before their trips.

## FAQs

If there are any questions that have not been answered then please visit our website at [www.masterliveboards.com/about-us/faqs](http://www.masterliveboards.com/about-us/faqs) or contact our reservations team at [bookings@masterliveboards.com](mailto:bookings@masterliveboards.com).

## Head Office

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## French Polynesia

Operations Manager

T: +689 87244203

### Emergency:

T: +15053959407

### Address for visa application:

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Bud Gilroy

Industrial zone of Fare Ute

Papeete, Tahiti 98715

FRENCH POLYNESIA

## What to Bring

The following is a check list of items that you should ensure to bring with you for your trip aboard a Master Liveboards vessel.

### Passport

3-6 month validity depending on the nationality & at least 2 empty pages for visa stickers and stamps

### Travel Documents

Flight tickets - International & Domestic; hotel booking; excursions

### Cash & Credit Card for emergencies

Recommended amount (additional to park & port fees): 250 - 400USD

### Diving Certification & Logbook

Including Nitrox Card if certified & intending to use Nitrox

### Travel and Diving Insurance Documents

To include emergency medical evacuation

### Essential Diving Items

Dive computer with full battery

### Toiletries & Medications

Including sunscreen & insect repellent

Inform booking team of medical conditions

### Essential Clothing Items

Swim wear, hat and lightweight jacket

***Guests are strongly advised to carry essential items in hand luggage in case of lost or delayed luggage through International or Domestic Flights.***