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TAHITI

TOURISME

Cuisine of *The Islands of Tahiti*

The Cuisine of *The Islands of Tahiti* is internationally renowned for its fresh fish and exotic fruits and vegetables, prepared in the indigenous Polynesian way with a touch of French flair. Restaurants throughout the islands offer French, Tahitian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Japanese, and Italian dishes for the discerning palate. Tahitians are known for their delicate sauces, which often incorporate home-grown vanilla and freshly squeezed coconut milk. The following is an overview of signature cuisines and dishes that gastro travelers should try:

Signature Dishes *Poisson cru* (ia ota) is the national dish and can be found in most restaurants. This melt-in-your-mouth entrée consists of raw fish and diced vegetables soaked in coconut milk and marinated with lime juice. *Chevrettes*, another popular Tahitian dish, are tasty freshwater shrimp which can also be found throughout the islands.

Desserts No *amura'a* (meal) is complete without a rich island inspired dessert. The ultimate Tahitian dessert indulgence is *poe*, a sweet pudding made of taro root flavored with banana, vanilla, papaya or pumpkin and topped with a rich coconut-milk sauce. Looking for something a little lighter? Try the mouth-watering French croissants or the tasty biscuit-like treats, *kato*, which are made with coconut milk. A cup of the local coffee flavored with vanilla and served with sugar and coconut cream complements any of these delicious Tahitian treats.

Food Trucks *Les Roulottes* or "food trucks," located near the wharf in Papeete, are a great way to experience Tahiti's local cuisine and culture. These *roulottes*, are colorful, electrically lit vans that offer the best inexpensive dining. Both locals and visitors alike can be found dining and enjoying a variety of dishes, from roast pork and pizzas to chow mein and flaming crêpes.

Tahitian Feasts Another way to sample authentic Tahitian cuisine is to attend a Tahitian feast, called a *tamaaraa*. At the feast, visitors are greeted by traditional Polynesian singing, and dancing, and celebration. Native Tahitian local dishes of fish, roasted pork and chicken cooked and served from an underground oven called an *ahima'a*. Visitors to *The Islands of Tahiti* will receive a final touch of Tahitian tradition as the *tamaaraa* concludes with a full Polynesian show complete with costumes and dancing.

Notable Chefs and Culinary Experiences

Tahiti

The Manava Suite Resort Tahiti offers a menu that pairs French cuisine with local flavors, featuring dishes such as lime and vanilla foie gras, mint-infused green pea vichyssoise flavored with Tahitian vanilla oil, chocolate lava cake with Tahitian vanilla ice cream, and much more. Chef Patrick Mariot is at the helm of these culinary creations: originally from France, Chef Mariot has trained under world-renowned and starred chefs and has been with Manava Suite Resort Tahiti since 2014.

Moorea

Moorea Food Adventures with local chef Heimata Hall is a unique culinary and cultural experience from a local's perspective: visitors embark on a guided tour of Moorea while enjoying a sampling of the diverse cultural melting pot of Tahitian cuisine. During the four- to five-hour Tama'a Street Food Tour, visitors become immersed in a cultural culinary experience, discovering authentic local cuisine from Moorea's best vendors, food stands, cafes, and businesses. Visitors will get a taste of local fruits, *casse-croute*, fish dishes, *pai*, *mape*, and other local snacks that stem from the three cultures, Tahitian, Chinese, and French, that make up French Polynesia today.

Bora Bora

Lagoon Restaurant by Jean Georges is St. Regis Bora Bora Resort's signature fine dining restaurant, featuring a unique French-and-Asian melding of cuisines created by Jean-Georges Vongerichten. While the cuisine is spectacular, the view from this overwater restaurant makes the dining experience unforgettable: enjoy a direct view of Mount Otemanu as you dine above the calm, turquoise waters of the glistening Bora Bora lagoon. Look closely, and you might see nurse sharks drift past your window seat. The floors of Lagoon Restaurant's terrace and dining room feature long glass panels that offer a glimpse at the black-tip sharks that live in the enclosed water park beneath the restaurant. The overwater terrace is the perfect place to admire Bora Bora's breathtaking sunsets.

Uravena is a local fish found only in the deep waters of *The Islands of Tahiti*, and served exclusively at the St. Regis Bora Bora Resort. Using a special technique passed down through the generations and a V-shaped hook made from miki miki wood, only a few highly-skilled fishermen can catch *uravena*.

Rangiroa

The Hotel Kia Ora Resort & Spa in Rangiroa incorporates honey that is cultivated on the island. The local honey is featured in several of the hotel's culinary selections. Rangiroa honey is a multi-floral honey harvested on the islets of Avatoru and Namaite in the Rangiroa atoll. This honey comes from the foraging of coconut, kahaia, ooru, and miki miki flowers. Uniquely fragrant and dark in color, the Rangiroa honey produced by the beekeeper of Rangiroa has won several gold medals in honey-tasting competitions throughout *The Islands of Tahiti*. One of the hotel's best sellers is their homemade Rangiroa honey ice cream with caramelized diced almonds. The hotel's Miki Miki Bar offers two Rangiroa honey-based cocktails: the Sweet Honeymoon, composed of dark rum, pineapple juice, cacao liquor, Rangiroa honey, and coconut ice cream, and the Honey Rangi Martini, composed of vodka, Malibu rum, Rangiroa honey, and Tahitian vanilla.

Chef Eric Rousseau, Master Chef at the Hotel Kia Ora Resort & Spa in Rangiroa, was born and raised in Tahiti. His mother, the Chef de Cuisine at Pitate Restaurant in Tahiti, ignited Eric's passion for cooking at a young age. Eric began his professional culinary career in Alsace, France, with Mercure Hotels. He returned to *The Islands of Tahiti* in 1992, working under the guidance of French Chef Jean-René Lepape. Eric has been with the Hotel Kia Ora Resort & Spa since 2004 and became the Master Chef in 2015. Eric is passionate about creating new dishes, such as the grouper with almonds, curry, and coconut sauce, and often incorporates local products, such as *corori*, or Polynesian mother-of-pearl scallops, into his tasty creations.

Tahaa

Tahitian vanilla is a unique species of vanilla that grows only in *The Islands of Tahiti*. Nearly 80% of all Tahitian vanilla is produced in Tahaa, a small island located 150 miles east of Tahiti. Tahitian vanilla plants blossom twice a year, and each flower blooms for only six hours. During this small window, each delicate flower must be pollinated by hand. Altogether, it takes about nine months to develop a dried pod for culinary use. The traditional cuisine of *The Islands of Tahiti* has many uses for Tahitian vanilla, and can be found in Tahitian rum, banana *poe*, ice cream, savory sauces used in fresh seafood dishes, and more.

La Vallée de la Vanille and Maison de La Vanille are two prominent Tahitian vanilla plantations in Tahaa that offer guided tours. Visitors can witness and learn about the cultivation process, shop for fresh Tahitian

vanilla and Tahitian vanilla-based products, and enjoy tasty culinary samples that incorporate Tahitian vanilla. While Tahaa is the most notable island for Tahitian vanilla cultivation, plantation tours are also available in Huahine, Bora Bora, and Tahiti.

About Tahiti Tourisme United States

Tahiti Tourisme United States (TTUS) is the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for the country of French Polynesia, more commonly known as *The Islands of Tahiti*. As the DMO for *The Islands of Tahiti*, TTUS liaises with airline, cruise line, hotel, resort, tour operator, travel advisor and consortia

partners to develop product, launch marketing initiatives, and generate robust tourism trade within French Polynesia.

About *The Islands of Tahiti*

Located in the South Pacific, *The Islands of Tahiti* are just eight hours by air from California. Surrounded by pristine, crystal clear blue waters, the 118 islands and atolls offer natural beauty, authentic island culture, and unique French Polynesian style. *The Islands of Tahiti* are world-renowned for their white- sand beaches, stunning turquoise lagoons and varied landscapes ranging from coral atolls to volcanic mountain peaks. Each island offers a variety of accommodation experiences from luxurious resorts with overwater villas, to family guesthouses, to sailing via private charter or scheduled cruise. Privacy comes naturally in *The Islands of Tahiti* and offers visitors the space to relax and reconnect and to be *Embraced By Mana*. *Mana* is the life force and spirit that connects all things in *The Islands of Tahiti*. Tahiti is halfway between California and Australia, on the same side of the International Date Line as North America and in the same time zone as Hawaii. For further information, www.tahititourisme.com or call (310) 414-8484.

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