

2011 - 2012 GUIDE
SCUBA DIVING
TAHITI & HER ISLANDS



www.tahiti-diving.com



SCUBA DIVING IN TAHITI AND HER ISLANDS ENVIRONMENT AND DIVE FACILITIES

TE MOANA NUI...

6

LE GRAND OcéAN

THE COURAGE OF THE FIRST MIGRANTS

It is commonly thought that the first migrants arrived from Southeast Asia about 2,000 years ago. They traveled on large sailing outrigger canoes guided by celestial navigation and their amazing knowledge of the ocean. Isolated for 1,500 years, the Ma'ohi developed ocean oriented society and culture. The *Moana Nui* still plays a prominent part for the Polynesians, especially in the remote islands where life is only possible due to the ocean.

A VERY SPECIFIC GEOLOGY

The islands and atolls of Tahiti are all of volcanic origin. Their formation began about 75 million years ago. Although the different groups of islands do not date from the same period, the geological phenomenon is similar to all of them. This is a very simple explanation of the formation and geology of the Polynesian islands: The Earth's crust, called lithosphere, moves by plates. Volcanic activity develops when a plate meets a set hot area. A volcano can emerge from the ocean. When the lithosphere moves again, the volcano becomes extinct. Coral develops around the extinct volcano, which becomes a mountainous island. The island erodes in time. The coral continues to grow in the same place, close to





the water's surface, as it needs light to develop. Thus, a lagoon appears between the coral reef and the main island. After a few million years, the main island is completely eroded and has disappeared but the lagoon and the reef are still there. An atoll is born.

SCUBA DIVING

The moana, or ocean, is a truly idyllic place for ocean lovers and scuba divers. Close your eyes and imagine that you are on a dive boat leaving the crystal clear blue lagoon and going through the pass... You are now in the ocean and the boat cruises along the coral reef while you admire the lush mountains or the atolls motu (islets). A few minutes later, you are entering a fascinating underwater world. The weather conditions are perfect. The ocean is calm, clear and warm... The reef life is simply breathtaking... You will enjoy the rare feeling of being practically alone at a dive site with your guide. Many of the dive sites are close to the dive centers and transportation to and from is usually fairly short.

DIVE SITES:

PASSES AND COR

© P. Bacchet

8

In many islands, the dives take place close to a pass and the dive profile will vary depending on currents and tides. A pass is a natural boundary between two ecosystems. It allows the ocean to fill in the lagoon thanks to the swell. The excess volume of water is drained out to the ocean while creating currents likely to be strong. The lagoon's nutritive elements (mainly zooplankton and phytoplankton) are carried into the ocean and this phenomenon allows the marine wildlife to settle.

The outer reef slope is nice to explore. Mild or steep, sometimes vertical, it shelters a large amount of marine life. The Society Islands' reefs and shores offer a more varied habitat than that of the atolls and also a more important biodiversity.

Diving in a pass in the drift usually requires a good level of experience. Drift dives are usually arranged in the Tuamotu atolls (Rangiroa, Fakarava, Tikehau, etc.). In the Society Islands, conditions are excellent for both beginners and refresher dives before drift diving in the Tuamotu archipelago.

RAL REEFS



© R. Sahuquet



© J. Chas

DIVE CENTERS

All dive centers are fully equipped and understand French and English. Some of them also understand Italian, Spanish, German and Japanese. Don't bother traveling with your own gear. The dive centers will have all the necessary gear for you, usually at no extra cost. However, it is recommended that you bring your own personal dive computer.

PRIVATE DIVES

Most dive shops will offer you the opportunity to have a «private» service. Thus, a boat and an instructor will be at your sole service during your dives.

DIVING WITH CHILDREN

There is no specific regulation in terms of age and your children will enjoy discovering scuba diving depending on the available gear and organization of each dive shop. Most of them offer introductory dives and sometimes have children's gear available (small tanks, BCDs, specific boat set up, course and specialized instructor) while appropriate dive sites for them.

DIVE SITES:

PASSES AND CORAL REEFS





PASSES: AN INTERESTING PHENOMENON

To develop a coral reef, sun light with an average water temperature of 26°C (78°F) and a salinity of 35‰ degrees are both needed. The fresh water coming from the rivers prevents the formation of the reef. This is the reason why there is a breach in the amazing coral constructions facing riverbanks. This is particularly striking in the Windward Islands such as Tahiti and Moorea. Fresh water flows through rugged impressive mountains and valleys to reach the lagoon and its reef creating a natural path to the ocean.

ECOLOGY AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The islands of Moorea and Fakarava are leaders in the field of environmental protection. They are endowed with a regulatory system designed to make the most of their marine natural resources while respecting the biosphere. Thus, a management plan of the marine space has been established for both islands and promotes harmony between tourism development and environment. As the main witnesses of the use of natural resources in the water-based leisure industry, diving centres are privileged partners acting for the application and promotion of these management plans.



TAHITI AND HER ISLANDS ALSO OFFER...

Numerous water activities such as surfing, kayaking and lagoon discovery eco-tours are available on most islands. Snorkeling around any island will give you the opportunity to encounter the underwater life through hundreds of coral heads. You can discover the islands on a horseback hiking, or a 4WD safari trek through the lush valleys of the Society or Marquesas Islands. They will provide a new dimension to your stay. You will marvel while overlooking the aqua blue lagoons and be enthralled by the immensity of the ocean.



HAWKSBILL TURTLE

THE UNDERWATER FAUNA



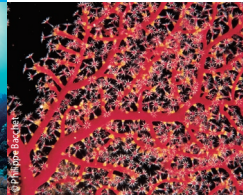
GREY REEF SHARK



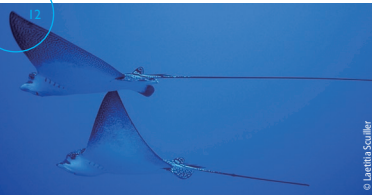
REEF CRAB



POCILLOPORA CORAL



GORGONIA



EAGLE RAYS



MANTA RAYS



EMPEROR ANGELFISH



ANEMONE AND CLOWN FISH



BUTTERFLY FISH



JAVANESE MORAY EEL



GREASY GROUPE



MARBLED GROUPE



HUMPBACK WHALE

BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN



LEMON SHARK

SILVERTIP SHARK



NUDIBRANCH



TRITON



STARFISH



REEF SHRIMP



TALPARIA TALPA PORCELAIN SEASHELL



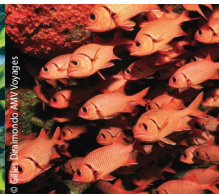
TIGER PORCELAIN SEASHELL (CYPRAEA TIGRIS)



PADDLETAIL SNAPPER



BLUELINED SNAPPER



SOLDIER FISH



SCHOOL OF BARRACUDAS



NAPOLEON WRASSE



BLACK JACKFISH

THE SOCIETY ISLANDS



© P. Bacchet



© G. Diraimondo AMV Voyages



14

This archipelago is divided in two parts of mountainous islands: the Windward Islands, such as Tahiti and Moorea and the Leeward islands such as Bora Bora. French Polynesia counts 260,000 inhabitants. More than a half live on the main island of Tahiti where the only international airport is located. Papeete is the capital city and the home to the main government departments.





© L.Pesquié BLP Production

ACCOMMODATION

The main islands offer a wide choice of luxury and intermediate resorts as well as family hotels.

15

SCUBA DIVING

The conditions are excellent and the dive sites are ideal for divers of all levels. The quiet lagoon is the perfect place for an introductory or refresher dive amongst the exceptional reef life. Most dives are organized close to the passes. You will probably encounter impressive animals such as black tip sharks, grey reef sharks, jackfish, Napoleon wrasses and manta rays.

Can we dive in a pass? The lagoon water level and the channel current vary depending on the swell magnitude and direction. The swell fills in the lagoon, which empties through the passes. The current in the passes of the Society Islands goes out most of the time and one should be careful when diving these areas.

TAHITI, THE QUEEN OF THE PACIFIC



DIVING CENTERS:




- A** TAHITI CHARTER ISLAND
- B** SCUBA TEK TAHITI
- C** TOPDIVE TAHITI
- D** TAHITI PLONGÉE
- E** FLUID
- F** ELEUTHERA
- G** TAHITI ITI DIVING





© S. Frink

DIVE SITES

- 1 ARUE CLIFFS**
Ocean, outer reef slope
Max. depth 60m
- 2 ARUE'S FAULT**
Ocean, outer slope, max. depth 60m
- 3 LA ZELEE**
Ocean, outer reef slope- Average depth 18m
- 4 FAA'A SHIP WRECKS** 
Lagoon – Average depth 18m
- 5 WHITE VALLEY** 
Ocean, outer reef slope. Average depth 18m
- 6 THE AQUARIUM**
Lagoon, protected area – up to 14m of depth
- 7 EEL VALLEY**
Ocean, outer reef slope- Average depth 25m
- 8 SAINT-ETIENNE DROP-OFF**
Ocean, outer reef slope- Up to 60m of depth.
- 9 TURTLE PLATEAU**
Ocean- Bay- Average depth 20m
- 10 THE SPRING**
Ocean- Bay- Average depth 29m
- 11 TE MARUATA**
Ocean, outer reef slope- Average depth 29m
- 12 PAPEARI'S WHITE CANYON**
Ocean, up to 60m of depth
- 13 HOLE IN THE LAGOON**
Lagoon – Up to 29m of depth
- 14 GORGONES**
Ocean, drop off, up to 60m of depth
- 15 THE VAVI**
Ocean, outer reef slope -Up to 50m of depth.
- 16 THE MARADO** 
Ocean, outer reef slope -Up to 60m of depth
- 17 THE HORSESHOE**
Lagoon - Ocean
- 18 TE PARI CAVE**
Ocean, depth: 5 to 17m
- 19 TAUTIRA'S FAULT**
Ocean, from 40 to 60m of depth
- 20 FAAONE ROSES**
Ocean, from 29 to 49m of depth



TAHITI, THE QUEEN OF THE PACIFIC FAVORITES



20

© S. Frink

SEAPLANE AND SCHOONER

One dive, two wrecks! These wrecks were sunk intentionally; the catalina seaplane sunk in 1962 and the old wooden schooner in 1976. Both wrecks lie on the white sandy bottom of the lagoon outside Faa'a at depths between 7 and 22 meters. Numerous species of fish have taken refuge in the wrecks making for a pleasurable experience for divers and underwater photographers.

WHITE VALLEY

Incredible diving along the reef slope a stone's throw away from the pass of Papeete. Fish-feeding has in a short few years resulted in a rich and diverse aquatic fauna. The site itself is remarkable in its contours and with its white sandy bottom. The water clarity is not as good as in the Tuamotu Archipelago and the currents can be rather strong. Nevertheless, schools of trevally, sharks, barracudas, eels and turtles all frequent the area throughout the year thereby giving divers an impression of the abundance of sea life in Polynesian waters.



LA MARADO

This sumptuous drop-off unveils a surprising seabed relief, certainly one of the most beautiful of the Tahiti Peninsula. Covered with gorgonias from a depth of 20 meters, it suits any kind of divers.

MOOREA, THE MAGICAL ISLAND



© F. Banfi



© G. Le Bacon

Tahiti and Moorea are only 17 km (11 miles) apart. Moorea is easily accessible by plane or ferry throughout the day. You will arrive in a totally different world. There, everything is calm and peaceful. The island is well known as a dive destination thanks to the development of shark feeding. This activity has allowed a better understanding of sharks and offers visitors and divers to discover these fascinating creatures. Lemon sharks are a must-encounter! Nowadays, the activity is still carried out by some dive centers but is also subject to a local government regulation. Some dive schools also offer a PADI specialty named «Sharks of French Polynesia”.

BUT ALSO...

Moorea shelters two large, stunning bays. The famous Cooks Bay is one of them but surprisingly enough; Captain Cook actually arrived in the adjacent bay of Opunohu !

MOOREA, THE MAGICAL ISLAND



© P. Bacchet

DIVING CENTERS:

24

- A** IA ORA DIVING
- B** MOOREA BLUE DIVING CENTER
- C** TOPDIVE MOOREA - INTERCONTINENTAL
- D** SCUBAPITI
- E** MOOREA FUN DIVE
- F** FARE VAIHERE
- G** TOPDIVE MOOREA - HILTON





© F. Banfi

DIVE SITES

1 THE DROP-OFF

Ocean, outer reef slope
Max. depth 45m

2 THE MOTU

Ocean, outside reef slope -Average
depth 25m; Max. depth 50m

3 RAY PASSAGE

4 VAIARE RIGHT

5 TEAVARO

Lagoon - Average depth 6m

6 WHALES' CORRIDOR

Ocean, outer reef slope -Up to 29m
of depth

7 TEMAE

Ocean, sandy bottom slope-Average
depth 29m

8 BALI HAI WALL

Ocean, outer reef slope
Max. depth 29m

9 THE AQUARIUM

Lagoon - Up to 18m of depth

10 THE BLUE ISLAND

Pass - Depth up to 29m

11 LEMON SHARK VALLEY

Ocean, outer slope, between
15 and 25m of depth

12 THE ROSE GARDEN

Deep ocean-Up to 50m of depth

13 THE CANYONS

Ocean, outer reef slope
Max. depth 29m

14 TAOTOI

Ocean, outer reef slope - Average
depth 20m

15 THE TIKI

Ocean, outer reef slope - Average
depth 20m



MOOREA, THE MAGIC ISLAND FAVORITES



OPUNOHU CANYONS

Sheltered from the trade winds, Opunohu pass is a large area which most dive centers like to visit. It is also among the most diversified dives of the island with canyons, drop-offs and caves. Black tip and lemon sharks but also turtles, a school of snappers and surgeonfish are accustomed to divers and underwater photographers. Further down, at a depth of about 40 meters, the most experienced divers will discover the rose garden which architecture and beauty inspire calm and delight.

TIKI

Located on the northwest point of the island, the strength and direction of the current change quickly. This is the ideal habitat for a school of grey reef sharks, which has settled here. It is an easy



and educational dive, watching and learning more about their behavior. During the humpback whale season (July to November), you are likely to hear a male sing thus announcing his presence to other whales in the area.

VAIARE

This spot faces Vaiare's harbor and is home to black tip sharks, sea turtles, schools of barracudas and sometimes rays. During the season, up to six lemon sharks can be encountered.

TAHAA, THE VANILLA ISLAND



© V. Audet

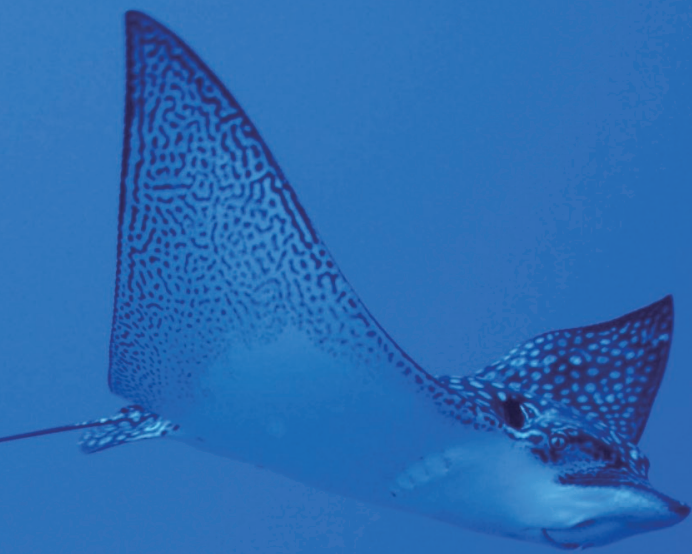
32

As a unique worldwide geological phenomenon, Tahaa and Raiatea lie in the same lagoon and are only separated by a 3 km (1.8 miles) channel. You can only reach the island by boat either from Raiatea or Bora Bora. Tahaa is a secluded island with an economy based on agriculture, such as the famous and exquisite Tahitian vanilla, as well as the sought after Tahitian cultured pearl. There is a very nice underwater feeling with a varied and bountiful fauna.



BUT ALSO...

A tour of the vanilla plantations will allow you to appreciate the delicate work performed by specialists who obtain this very special bean grown from an orchid. In terms of accommodation, you will enjoy family hotels. One prestigious resort is located on a motu facing the Pearl of the island of Bora Bora.

© L. Scullier



DIVING CENTERS

- 1 CERAN HOOKS** 
Pass- Drift diving
Max. depth 50m
- 2 COAST 323/TAPUTAPU**
Ocean – Max. depth 29m
- 3 IVY/ HONU REEF**
Lagoon – Max. depth 18m
- 4 TAU TAU**
Ocean – Max. depth 50m
- 5 PAI PAI/TIVA PASS** 
Pass- Drift diving
Max. depth 29m
- 6 HIRO'S CANOES**
2 dive spots, ocean, max. depth 25m
- 7 TOARAA**
Lagoon, max. depth 15m, black coral
- 8 RUUTIA** 
Reef external, - Max. depth 40m
- 9 THE OCTOPUS HOLE**
Lagoon, cave - Max. depth 55m



© G. Diraimondo/AMV Voyages

TAHAA



DIVE SITES:

- A** TAHAA DIVING - RELAIS & CHÂTEAUX
- B** TAHAA DIVING - TAPUAMU



TAHAA, THE VANILLA ISLAND FAVORITES



35

PAIPAI PASS

Located on the west coast of Taha'a, sea life is varied within the pass. On the right side, experienced divers will discover a drop off covered in yellow coral. The dive lies between 25 and 30 meters (80 to 100 feet) and the breaches along the wall shelter shy *ma'o mamaru* (white tip sharks). On the left, the dive is shallower between 15 to 18 meters (50 to 60 feet) and you will see a profusion of life such as Napoleon wrasses, eagle rays, tuna, spadefish, moray eels, surgeon and parrotfish.

RUUTIA, TAU TAU, TAPUTAPU

The outer north reef offers beautiful diving along the slope with very clear water and an excellent visibility up to a depth of 40 meters (120 ft). In such conditions, divers can stop at the bottom and enjoy the show: schools of jackfish, big Napoleon wrasses, Maori snappers, barracudas, black and white tip sharks.

HUAHINE, THE SECLUDED ISLAND



© G. Diraimondo/ AMV Voyages

36

Slightly off the usual tourist track, the island of Huahine actually consists of two islands linked by a 50 m (165 ft) long bridge. Huahine Nui is the most untouched. The economy of the island is mostly oriented towards agriculture and fishing.

It is a beautiful dive destination and Fitiï pass compares to some of the Tuamotu atolls in terms of fish variety in certain areas. Schools of sharks, jackfish, spadefish and barracuda live there in harmony with the usual smaller tropical fish. Huahine is in no doubt a great stop before diving the Tuamotu.

BUT ALSO...

The local history is particularly rich. You will discover beautiful ancient marae – open-air religious temples. The island always managed to remain independent throughout history, from the time of the powerful tribal chiefs of Bora Bora to the arrival of the first European explorers.





DIVING CENTERS

- 1 THE ROSES**
Ocean – Max. depth 60m
- 2 CORAL CITY**
Ocean – Max. depth 29m
- 3 FA'A MITI**
Ocean – Max. depth 25m
- 4 FITII DROP-OFF** 
Lagoon- Max. depth 6m
- 5 AVAPEHI PASS** 
Pass / Close to the reef
Max. depth 20m
- 6 YELLOW VALLEY**
Ocean – Max. depth 35m
- 7 AVEA BEACH**
Lagoon – Max. depth 6m
- 8 PAREA DROP-OFF**
Lagoon – Max. depth 20m
- 9 HIVA SPOT**
Ocean – Max. depth 29m



© P. Baccchet



DIVE SITES:

- A** PACIFIC BLUE ADVENTURE
- B** MAHANA DIVE
- C** HEREMITI DIVE



HUAHINE, THE SECLUDED ISLAND FAVORITES



AVAPEHI PASS

This dive is considered an exception to the rule! It is the only dive starting from the outer reef and going into the lagoon through this pass. A massive school of jackfish from 7 meters (23 feet) to the surface will greet you. Further down, (15 meters / 50 feet) you will come upon a school of barracudas. They look still, like they are suspended in between the water and the weak current. Around 25 meters (80 feet) you will enjoy diving with eagle rays and spadefish.

FA'A MITI

Located on the ocean side and usually sheltered from the swell, wind and current, the spot is open to all divers. The mild outer slope is covered with a multitude of coral. As soon as you start your descent, a few Black tip sharks followed by a Napoleon fish will come and greet you. Numerous small butterflyfish, unicornfish, surgeonfish will swim by your guide. However, the highlights of the dive are definitely the large moray eels going out of their hole to swim in the open water. The dive ends in a valley and cave like scenery where many lionfish hide.

BORA BORA, THE MYTHICAL ISLAND



44

© tim-mckenna.com

Mentioning this mythical place sparks a glitter in one's eyes. Bora Bora symbolizes the tropical dream. The island offers the most diverse choice in luxury lodging and dive centers.




The ideal dive conditions are met to discover scuba diving or go on a refresher dive. You will discover the pass and the outer reef (*Muri Muri*) to encounter, among others: sharks, sea turtles, barracudas and jackfish.

BUT ALSO...

Learn a bit of the island's history during a walk up a hill or on a 4WD ride and see the remnants of WWII cannons when Bora Bora was a US military base.



DIVING CENTERS

- 1 **MURI MURI** 
Ocean - Max. depth 25m
- 2 **HAAPITI**
Ocean, outer reef slope
Max. depth 20m
- 3 **TEAVANUI PASS**
Pass - Max. depth 40m
- 4 **TAPU** 
Ocean - Max. depth 22m
- 5 **TOOPUA**
Lagoon - Max. depth 15m
- 6 **TURIROA**
Ocean, outer reef slope
Max. depth 45m
- 7 **THE AQUARIUM**
Lagoon - Max. depth 6m
- 8 **TUPITIPITI**
Ocean, outer reef slope
Max. depth 60m
- 9 **ANAU** 
Lagoon - Max. depth 18m

© G. Diraimondo / AMV Voyages



DIVE SITES:

- A BLUE NUI BY TOPDIVE
BORA PEARL BEACH
- B TOPDIVE BORA BORA - VAITAPE
- C BORA DIVING CENTER - MATIRA
- D DIVEASY
- E TOPDIVE BORA BORA
INTERCONTINENTAL THALASSO
- F BORA DIVING CENTER - MERIDIEN



BORA BORA, THE MYTHICAL ISLAND FAVORITES



47

ANAU

Located east of the island, this lagoon dive suits any kind of divers and allows to watch a wide variety of marine organisms, fish and corals. Manta rays have made this site famous worldwide. Recently, the dive shops have regulated the access to the site for conservation purposes.

TAPU

Named after the motu used as an indication to find the dive site, it is located on the outer slope on the left of Teavanui pass, Bora Bora's unique pass. Divers seeking for excitement and photographers will be overwhelmed at the sight of massive lemon sharks at a depth of 25 meters (80 feet). They will not hesitate to swim around the divers and come very close to your camera lens.

MURI MURI

Also named The White Valley, this long bright, white sand path surrounded by coral lies in 40 meters of depth (130 feet). It leads to a large garden eel colony. The visibility is good and you will see the large school of jackfish coming to greet you. Barracudas also like to join dive groups. At the end of the dive, you will admire the wide coral bed at the bottom before going back to boat at anchor.

TUAMOTU

ARCHIPELAGO



© D. Hazama



© G. Diraimondo / AMV Voyages

48

The Tuamotu archipelago is the largest group of islands in French Polynesia, and yet the least populated. Only consisting of atolls and ocean, you will feel very remote from the rest of the world. Just like the 16,000 Paumotu (inhabitants of these atolls), you will learn the power of the *Moana Nui* (big ocean) in everyday life. The main resources are coprah, fishing, pearl farming and dive tourism on the most developed atolls.

ACCOMMODATION

A few hotels are established on the most developed atolls. Family hotels are found almost everywhere and are pleasant. The Paumotu are proud of their islands and will be delighted to share a few days of their life with you.

DIVE SHOPS

Despite the isolation, the dive centers are well equipped and their guides very experienced. Diving is organized following the usual safety requirements. Rangiroa became the pioneer scuba diving atoll in this archipelago. Since, this activity has developed around other islands such as Fakarava, Tikehau, Manihi and Makemo.



DIVING

Most dives take place in the passes and require a bit of experience. A refresher dive on the outer reef slope may be well advised. A briefing is necessary to all skill levels of divers before they attempt to do a drift dive through a pass. You will always start your dive in the incoming current (from the ocean to the lagoon). You will get this amazing weightlessness feeling while drifting. The Tuamotu passes are the best spots to encounter the local pelagic fauna. The water is very clear and the visibility is excellent.

HOW WILL THE DIVES TAKE PLACE ?

Drift dives will start outside of the reef near the pass entrance where the boat will drop you off. Your guide will give you a complete briefing of the dive profile beforehand. Depending on experience level, the dive master may drop divers and meet them inside the lagoon – or, have a skipper bring the boat in while the dive master shoots the pass with the divers.



RANGIROA, THE ENDLESS LAGOON



50

© P. Bacchet

Rangiroa shelters two passes. It is the second largest atoll in the world after Kwajalein in Micronesia. Its lagoon stretches to a length of 76km (47 miles) with a width of 24km (15 miles). The entire island of Tahiti could fit within Rangiroa's lagoon! There are 240 motu and hundreds of hoa that shape the coral reef. Rangiroa is famed worldwide for its unique and fabulous underwater encounters.



DIVING CENTERS

- 1 AVATORU PASS** 
Pass - Up to 25m of depth
- 2 AVATORU THE SMALL PASS**
Pass - Average depth 20m
- 3 THE CANYONS** 
Pass - Up to 30m of depth
- 4 THE AQUARIUM / MOTU NUI NU**
Lagoon - Average depth 15m
- 5 HAMERHEAD PLATEAU**
Ocean - Up to 50m of depth
- 6 THE ANGLE**
Ocean, outer reef slope - up to 50m of depth
- 7 THE WINDMILL (TIPUTA)**
Ocean, outer reef slope
Average depth 20m
- 8 THE BIG BLUE** 
Ocean - Up to 50m of depth



© D. Vieboe



DIVE SITES:

- A** RANGIROA PLONGÉE
- B** THE SIX PASSENGERS
- C** Y AKA PLONGÉE RANGIROA
- D** TOPDIVE RANGIROA - PLAGÉ REPOREPO
- E** TOPDIVE RANGIROA - KIA ORA
- F** RANGIROA PARADISE





RANGIROA, THE ENDLESS LAGON FAVORITES



53

TIPUTA PASS

The sun's rays break through the water surface into the deep blue ocean. The show starts immediately. One of the highlights of this dive is the encounter with the wild bottlenose dolphins (*tursiops truncatus*) swimming over a school of grey reef sharks. This pod of dolphins is resident of Tiputa Pass. About twenty years ago, when recreational diving first started in Rangiroa, the dolphins were there but would keep their distance. Today, the new generation of dolphins likes to come close to the divers and the magic of this encounter happens every day.

AVATORU PASS

This is your chance to encounter tapete (silvertip sharks - *carcharhinus albimarginatus*). This species of shark usually lives in much deeper water and it is truly an opportunity not to be missed. A little further on, you will see a huge school of jackfish sometimes divided in two due to the passing of a raira (Grey Reef Shark) or a Napoleon wrasse in a hurry. You are likely to encounter a manta ray during this marvelous dive. But, it is already time for your dive guide to inflate his safety signal device before you come up to the surface. The safety stop takes place in open water.

TIKEHAU, THE PINK SAND ISLAND



© G. Diraimondo / AMV Voyages

Well known for its pretty pink sand beaches and its amazing surf spots, the atoll is located 30 km (18 miles west of Rangiroa) and less than 1 hour flight from Papeete. Tikehau is said to be the most fishy atoll of the Tuamotu. The island's unique pass is where many pelagic species congregate and some beautiful encounters are awaiting you during a drift dive.





DIVING CENTERS

- 1 PUAFA**
Ocean, outside reef slope
up to 16m of depth
- 2 TEONAI** 
Ocean, outer reef slope
up to 20m depth
- 3 TUHEIAVA NORTHERN EXIT**
Pass / outer reef slope
Max. depth 25m
- 4 TUHEIAVA SOUTHERN EXIT**
Pass / outer reef slope
Max. depth 22m
- 5 TUHEIAVA PASS** 
Pass / Incoming currents
Max. depth 14m
- 6 TURTLE HOLE**
Ocean, outer reef slope
Max. depth 18m
- 7 HINA CHURCH BELL**
Ocean, outer reef slope
Max. depth 45m



© berthouard.com

DIVE SITES:

- A** BLUE NUI BY TOPDIVE TIKEHAU
- B** TIKEHAU PLONGEE





TIKEHAU, THE PINK SAND ISLAND FAVORITES



TUHEIAVA PASS

An easy dive... Through numerous cavities, you will discover a variety of underwater fauna. You will dive surrounded by the whole coastal reef life and see moray eels, Napoleon fish, barracudas and tuna. Just about every day, you will encounter a group of *Tapete* (silvertip sharks).

TEONAI

Most of the marine wildlife of the Tuamotu can be seen during this dive: from small fish hiding in small coral cavities to large pelagic predators. The dive usually starts along a wall with small cavities where you will enjoy a profusion of lionfish, moray eels, schools of paddletail snappers, Napoleon wrasses, surgeonfish and white tip sharks. The dive carries on along the drop off towards the pass to encounter *Tapete* (silver tip sharks). Dog tooth tuna circle around Heller's barracudas. The best time as far as encounters are concerned is between October and December.