

AVATIU (RAROTONGA), COOK ISLANDS

Rarotonga is the largest of the 15 Cook Islands. Located in the nine-island Southern Group, this volcanic island is surrounded by beautiful beaches. Avarua, on the north coast of the island, is the capital city of the country, which is a self-governing territory of New Zealand

KEY INFO

Currency: NZ Dollar (1 USD = 0.61 NZD)

Population: 13,007 (17,064 Cook Islands)

Emergency #: 911

Drinking water: Tap water is **not** drinkable

Time Zone: GMT-10

ID Requirements: Photo ID


Languages: English, Rarotongan (Cook Islands Māori)

Drive on the: Left

Pharmacy: CITC Pharmacy, Ara Tapu, Avarua 

Protection: Bug Spray & SPF 30+

Wi-Fi: Not commonly available

Post Office: Q6VF+H56, Ara Tapu, Avarua 

PORT LOCATION


Ships anchor off the shore and tender guests into Avatiu marina, 15-minute (1km) walk to Avarua town

Getting Around: If staying local to the marina and Avarua town, then walking is a good option. For going further afield, there is one main ring road that circles the island, this is also the bus route. There is a clockwise bus and anti-clockwise bus. A complete loop costs \$8. An A-to-B single journey costs \$5. A day pass costs \$10. Pay in cash to the driver.

One of the most popular ways to explore the island of Rarotonga is by moped and these can be rented for the day (approx. NZ\$80 once all admin costs included).

 www.adventurecookislands.com pedal bike + helmet (\$21/day), scooter + helmet (\$42/day)

 <https://www.riderarotonga.com> for pedal bikes (\$30/day) and e-bikes (\$50/day)

 www.cookislandsbus.com for more information about the public bus

Taxis: The Cook Islands Taxi Association (CITA) licenses official taxis to ensure consistent quality

Tourist Bus: There is no Hop-On Hop-Off Bus on Rarotonga, but the regular bus works just as well

Port Facilities: None

Port Address: Q6W8+53V, Harbour Rd, Avarua, Cook Islands 

THE \$3 BILL

While the national currency of the Cook Islands is the New Zealand dollar, the islands do also produce their own Cook Island dollar, which can only be spent on the islands themselves.

Unusually, the Cook Islands dollar is produced in a \$3 denomination, which can be fun to hunt down. For your best chance of finding one, go to the local markets.

ATM machine withdrawals are in New Zealand dollars.

BEACHES ON RAROTONGA

Nikao Beach: The closest beach to the tender pier, this white-sand beach is unfussy and lined with trees for shade. Adjacent to the island's international airport. 30-min walk, 5-min drive | 2.5km (anticlockwise)

Black Rock: One of the more popular tourist spots on Rarotonga's coastline, with a nice look-out point in addition to beach and rock-scrambling. 1-hour walk, 8-min drive | 5km (anticlockwise)

Arorangi District Beach: Lined with local restaurants and small resorts, this is a tourist hub for the island. Check out On the Beach Bar and Restaurant for lunch. 12-min drive | 7km (anticlockwise)

Aroa Beach: At the south of the island, this tropical white-sand beach is popular with snorkelers for its abundant sea life. 17-min drive | 11km (anticlockwise)

Tikioki Beach: On the south-east coast, this is another popular sandy-beach for sea-swimming and snorkeling. 17-min drive | 12km (clockwise)

Muri Beach: On the east coast, this idyllic long stretch of idyllic sandy beach is known for swimming, snorkeling and watersports. Check out The Mooring Fish Café for lunch. 15-min drive | 10.5km (clockwise)

RAROTONGA HIGHLIGHTS

Para O Tane Palace: Historic palace, built in the 1830s by Makea Pori Ariki. This is where the paramount ariki (chief) would live, prior to the Cook Islands becoming a British Dominion.
24 hours (external only) | Free | Q6VG+4P Avarua, Cook Islands

Cook Islands Library & Museum: Run by volunteers, who happily give tours of the small museum for no extra fee. 9a-12p (Mon, Wed, Fri) | \$5 | Q6RH+R3 Avarua, Cook Islands
www.cookislandsmuseum.org

Punanga Nui Market: A large and buzzing outdoor market, selling handicrafts and fresh produce. Also enjoy the live folk music while you're there.
8:30a-12p (Wed), 8a-12p (Sat) | Free | Q6V8+RMJ, Ara Tapu, Avarua, Cook Islands

Te Vara Nui Village: Visit this Māori cultural site for beautiful gardens and traditional performances that give an insight into culture and customs here.
10a-3p (Mon-Thu), 10a-2p (Fri-Sat) | \$55 | 15-min drive | 10km (clockwise) | P7W9+4G Ngatangia District
www.tevaranui.co.ck

WHERE TO EAT

On the Beach Bar and Restaurant: Enjoy locally sourced, freshly prepared food right on the beachfront in the Arorangi District (SW coast). 8a-11p | Q5G9+4X Arorangi District, Cook Islands
www.otbrarotonga.com

The Mooring Fish Café: It's obvious what's on the menu here. Tuck into a typical FOB sandwich at the turquoise food shack near Muri Beach. 11a-3p (Sun-Thu) | P7V8+2WV, Ngatangia District, Cook Islands

Tamarind House Restaurant & Ukulele Bar: For something a little fancier, tuck into lunch at this classy restaurant that is popular with the Islands' Prime Minister. 11a-10:30p | Q6WQ+H2 Avarua, Cook Islands
www.tamarindrarotonga.com

For more: www.cookislands.travel

 card payment accepted

 cash payment accepted